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THE OLD-WORLD HOUSE

ITS FURNITURE & DECORATION

BY

HERBERT CESCINSKY

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"ENGLISH FURNITURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,"
"EARLY ENGLISH FURNITURE AND WOODWORK,"
"ENGLISH DOMESTIC CLOCKS,"
"CHINESE FURNITURE," ETC., ETC.

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THE OLD-WORLD HOUSE

VOLUME II

CHAPTER I

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN ARTS, CRAFTS, AND LETTERS

ALTHOUGH the fifteenth century may be described as the Golden Age of the English woodworker, the period, from the accession of William III. in 1689 until the last decade of the eighteenth century, marks the decorative zenith of English furniture design and production. The concluding thirty years of the seventeenth century had witnessed a marked change in the tastes of the wealthy, a tendency towards greater elaboration in design and ornamentation. The insular character, which had been so pronounced in the case of the Tudor and Stuart oak furniture, was supplanted by fashions imported from the Continent and the East. Decorations of raised and gilded gesso on grounds of black or coloured lacquer, or of a gorgeous polychromatic inlay of marqueterie of various woods, superseded the severe but sturdy oak furniture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. English styles were, for the moment, completely submerged in the tide of a foreign invasion; cabinets and long-case clocks from Holland, fabrics from the looms of France and Flanders, and pieces from China and the East, imported via the North Italian trading cities, or in the ships which adventured round the Cape of Good Hope—the Cabo Tormentoso of the Portuguese navigators—and from thence to the Indies and the Orient, all found a place in the wealthy English home.

Much of this furniture was exceedingly fine, both in quality and in design. The general effect was, probably, garish, especially when

considered in relation to our English climate, and when contrasted with the quieter taste of the previous years, but at their inception fashions nearly always tend towards riot of colour and form. It is only when tastes become matured, and acquire proper perspective, that restraint begins to be exercised.

How long this importation of furniture and fabrics might have persisted, and how long English craftsmanship would have remained quiescent, had not other circumstances intervened, it is impossible to say. France and Holland, by State and Church persecutions, succeeded in exporting the artisans as well as their wares, and impoverished their own industries to the lasting benefit of those of this country. The domestic arts and crafts of England must have been enormously enriched by the result of such religious acts of intolerance as the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France and the persecutions in Holland at nearly the same period. I have already considered these causes at considerable length in another book,* and a mere repetition of the facts stated there is unnecessary here.

English furniture-making, which from 1680 onwards had been in a state of flux, appears to have become more or less consolidated by the end of the seventeenth century. French Huguenots and Dutch Protestants had settled down as English craftsmen. The trades of the joiner, the weaver, and the clock-maker had been fostered by guilds and patronised by the wealthy, with the result that from the period of the accession of Anne—or even some years before—until almost the end of the eighteenth century, we have practically a century of steady progress in these crafts. The identity of these foreign artisans is preserved in the case of signed pieces, such as clocks, where names from Holland such as Fromanteel and Oosterwyk, and others from France such as Nieue, Massy, Garon, Duchesne, and La Fontaine occur on dials until the middle of the eighteenth century. In the case of furniture we find a rapid absorption of the foreign element, with the result that a characteristically English style, generally known as Queen Anne, is evolved from various sources, and persists, in many of its basic details, until almost the end of the century. The furniture

* "English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century," vol. i., chap. ii.

of this period is typically English, strongly imbued with national feeling and with the pride of the able craftsman in his skill of hand and eye. New fashions arise and decline, and new conditions occur which help forward or retard this progress. The incursions of architects into the fields of furniture designing—often with very dubious results—in the years between 1720 and 1740, the introduction of mahogany about 1725, and the rise of Chippendale and his school after 1750, are all marked factors in the development of the industry of the maker of furniture. Added to these, in the latter half of the century we have the Scotch architect, Robert Adam, assisted in a minor degree by his three brothers, dominating the fashionable world, and being himself dominated, in turn, by the craftsmen of the schools of Chippendale and Hepplewhite, learning at their hands, with many costly failures and experiments, the expressions in design which wood allows (and, unfortunately, which composition demands), and stone, marble, and brick refuse. Last of all, at the very close of the eighteenth century, we have the advent of the Stockton-on-Tees cabinet-maker, teacher of design and perspective, writer of tracts and pamphlets, itinerant preacher, a man of parts, if not of genius, unfortunate Thomas Sheraton, with the arrogance of poverty and the warped mind of the unsuccessful, arriving in London to revolutionise the trade of the furniture maker of his time, and finding his end in want and obscurity, leaving behind him books which index his character better, perhaps, than any Boswelled biography could have done.

Before proceeding with the actual subject-matter of this volume, it may be of service, and permit of a better understanding of the factors which operated at this period, if we pass the eighteenth century in brief review.

The reign of Anne is instructive in showing the beneficial effect to a nation of mere passivity on the part of a monarch. England had demanded little, and had borne with much, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. With a tyrant and a miser in Henry VII., with a tyrant and a spendthrift in his burly son (one who even stooped so low as to debase a national coinage for his private gain, an offence for which his subjects could be punished with branding,

mutilation, and the gibbet), with Mary (who delighted in preserving the immortal souls of heretics by roasting their mortal bodies), with a more or less serene period under Elizabeth (the advantages of which have become historical), and then some ninety years of the Scotch Stuarts (with the interregnum caused by King Charles the First's veto on emigration), a race of kings either ascetic and bigoted or wildly profligate, but always treacherous and insincere, the cross of the people of England was often grievously heavy to be borne. William the Dutchman was duly imported to supplant the Stuart breed, and after the death of Anne, England again imported her king, this time from Hanover, and the four German Georges, a quartette of which one was a tame lunatic and the last a wild one, occupied, in turn, the throne of Great Britain.

"What, indeed, was the England of those days, the England of George I., 'who could not read English and who loved nothing but punch and fat women'; the England of George II., who 'had been a bad son, a worse father, an unfaithful husband, and an ungraceful lover'; the England over whose political life was the soiling smear of Walpolean corruption; the England whose cabinet ministers fought for the control of the secret service fund used for the bribery of the members of the House of Commons; the England which protested not a word that Fox, as paymaster of the forces, should have a hundred thousand pounds of the nation's money out at interest for his own account, and who at one time made a mart of his own office, and paid away as much as twenty-five thousand pounds in one morning, in the purchase of votes to buy supporters for a timorous government?"*

In the arts of war and peace events were busy during the reign of Anne. The campaigns and victories of Marlborough were the theme of the hour, and a grateful nation rewarded the hero of Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet with one of Vanbrugh's "heavy burdens."

The aristocratic classes were becoming more refined in their homes. It was no longer the custom to possess half a dozen houses and furniture only for one, to be carted from the one to the other

* "The West in the East." Price Collier. 1911.

according to the whim of residence of the noble owner. Ornamental china was coming into vogue as an adjunct to the beautifying of the home, and the potteries of Dresden and those of Lambeth were both established at this period. English horology was represented by Tompion, Knibb, Quare, Graham, Gould, and Gretton—to name six from a host of famous makers. Many well-known houses were built: Stoke Edith, Blenheim, and Castle Howard from the heavy hand of Vanbrugh, together with Marlborough House, Coombe Abbey, and Easton Neston, all dating from the reign of Anne. Steele's *Tatler* and Addison's *Spectator* flourished at this time, and Bishop Burnet wrote the "History of his own Times," which, however, was not published until Anne had been dead ten years and the author eleven.

The first of the German Georges ascended the throne and reigned until 1727. For thirteen years the Elector of the House of Hanover was exiled from his beloved country, dying in England of nostalgia and the cares of kingcraft. Lord Stanhope's ministry had superseded Walpole's in 1717 and lasted until 1721. That financial and Parliamentary morals were of the loosest possible description there is little doubt; witness the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in the December of 1720, and the facts, which came to light at the trial, of the bribery of lords and ladies of title and members of the Upper and Lower Houses. The crash, involving some eighteen millions of money, must have reacted upon the general trade of the country in a marked degree. The swindle was a "national" one—that is to say, it was on a scale large enough for the principals to escape punishment, if not prosecution. As in all these little adventures, many were ruined in the endeavour to make a thousand per cent. at the expense of the nation as a whole, and (another usual circumstance in these cases), the money mysteriously disappeared into thin air. A considerable amount was afterwards re-incarnated, and found its way into the building and furnishing of Houghton Hall. Sir Robert Walpole had kindly intervened on behalf of the directors of the South Sea Scheme!

Curiously enough, in spite of South Sea and other bubbles, the

reign of George I. was a period of great prosperity. Arts and crafts flourished both in England and in France. Of the French painters at this period, le Moyne and de Troy were at their zenith and the star of Nattier in the ascendant. Charles Cressent, the famous *ébéniste*, was busily employed on furniture for the nobles of the Regency. In England, Gerard Scotin was engraving two of the plates of Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode." Vanbrugh was at work at Grimsthorpe and Leoni at Latham Hall. Hawksmoor was engaged on his London churches and on the portico of Queen's College. Kent published his "Designs of Inigo Jones" in the last year of George I., and Gibbs, Halfpenny, and Batty Langley were similarly occupied in the following year. Jonathan Swift had enriched English literature with "Gulliver's Travels," and Thomson's "Seasons" and Gay's "Beggar's Opera" had added their quota.

Walpole was again in power from 1721 to 1742, a period of increased prosperity. On the Continent, Canaletto, Tiepolo, Oudry, Pater, and the great Boucher, were handing down to posterity the beauties of Italy and the glories of France; Caffieri was to achieve a posthumous reputation with his ormolu mountings for the elaborate furniture then being made by his noted fellow-craftsmen, Dubois, Oeben, and Saunier. Hogarth and Nollekens were acquiring renown, of a kind, in England. Kent was busy with that ugly experiment Devonshire House in Piccadilly, and with the Treasury Buildings in St. James's. Brettingham was collaborating with him at Holkham, and James Gibbs was engaged on the Radcliffe Library at Oxford. Flitcroft was building the largest private palace in England, Wentworth Woodhouse in Yorkshire.

Literature also shared in the general revival, the patronage of letters assisting, in turn, the bookseller. Books were not common in the reign of Anne, a fact evident enough by the almost total absence of the bookcase, as an article of furniture, before about 1720. The making of Pepys' library cases by Sympson was an event and one to be noted in the "Diary." By the middle of the century, however, a number of expensive architectural works had been published, those of Gibbs, Batty Langley, Ware, Halfpenny and Hawksmoor, for

example, where the cost of the engraving of the plates must have been a heavy item in the production. Of books connected, more or less, with our subject, Brunetti's "Ornaments" and Gibbs' "Shields" had appeared in 1731, and Copeland's and Lock's books were both published in 1746. Both of the latter collaborated on another book in 1752, and in 1754 the first edition of Chippendale's "Director" was issued. A second appeared in 1759—in the same year as Abraham Swan's "Designs in Carpentry"—and a third three years later. Fiction, poetry, and the drama were represented by Pope, Shenstone, Blair, Young, Akenside, Smollett, Fielding, Samuel Richardson, and Colley Cibber. Gray's "Elegy," Bolingbroke's "Letters," Edmund Burke's "Essays," Johnson's Dictionary, Sterne's "Tristram Shandy," and Richardson's "Sir Charles Grandison," all appeared in the one decade, and Sir Joshua discoursed on art at the same period. Chesterfield House in Mayfair, Nostell Priory near Wakefield, part of Chatsworth, and Harewood House, all originate from this early Georgian period, and if we extend our date as late as 1770, Kedleston, Sandon, Lansdowne House, Spencer House, Thorndon Hall, and Castle Hill in Dorset may be added.

Between 1740 and 1750 the potteries of Bow, Chelsea, and Rockingham were established, and the greatest of the English cabinet-makers, Thomas Chippendale, began to make a name in London. In the next decade the joiners Ince and Mayhew—who published a book of designs which throws a searching light on the design-authorship of many of the plates in that of Chippendale—Thomas Lock, and probably George Hepplewhite of Cripplegate (of posthumous reputation), began their careers, and the Worcester, Leeds, and Derby potteries were founded.

The English painters of the middle eighteenth century, either of renown or of notoriety, are numerous. Nathaniel Hone (the author of a scurrilous pictorial attack on the President of the Academy and Angelica Kauffmann), Sir Joshua himself, Gainsborough, Cipriani, West, and Wilson (both Benjamins), Fuseli (the imitator of old, and especially of dingy masters), and at a slightly later date, Lawrence and Romney, are all of this period. In France the names of

Greuze, Vernet (C. J.), Fragonard, and Drouais occur as the most familiar.

Robert Adam, in company with the French architect, Clérisseau, was exploring Diocletian's palace shortly after 1750, narrowly escaping being arrested as a spy, and returning to England to publish the sumptuous folio, "The Ruins of the Emperor Diocletian's Palace at Spalatro in Dalmatia," in 1764, to be followed by the more famous "Works in Architecture" in 1773.

George II. had occupied the throne of England until 1760, and was duly followed by the third of the House of Hanover. His reign had been fruitful in important historical events. There was war with France and trouble at home, culminating in the battle of Culloden. Clive was founding an Indian Empire and Wolfe was driving the French from the Canadas, losing his life, in company with Montcalm, on the Heights of Abraham. During the next reign, Boston, by taking stringent measures with English tea, in its harbour, began the war which counterbalanced the gain of Canada by the loss of the American colonies.

George III. carries us well into the nineteenth century, and with the last of the House of Hanover we are not concerned at all, excepting to record to his credit at least three magnificent coaching roads to Brighton, and to his discredit much of the monstrous Pavilion at the end of the journey. The eighteenth century closes with a picture of Corinthian bucks, with heavy play at White's and Wills', duels in Hyde Park, mad coaching feats on the Brighton Road, with interludes of prize-fights on Crawley Downs, alternating with fears of invasion by the "Little Corsican" and gallant deeds on sea by the English fleet. The age was wild and extravagant, and London itself had improved but little from the days when, less than forty years before, an armed escort was advisable for the traveller who wished to journey from Knightsbridge to Kensington without suffering from the more or less polite attentions of footpads.

From 1760 to the end of the century, however, is a record of inventive progress, witnessing the "spinning jenny," Arkwright's loom (which nearly caused the death of the inventor at the hands of

an infuriated populace), and Watt's steam engine (with due apologies to the Marquis of Worcester and others). It may be remembered to the credit—or otherwise—of the third King of the House of Hanover, that on December 10, 1768, he signed the constitution of " the Royal Academy for the purpose of cultivating and improving the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture." To the discredit of the North administration (if Lord North was not sufficiently punished by Gillray's cartoons), may be placed, among other things, the Gordon Riots and the loss of the American Colonies. To the list of achievements of the succeeding ministry may be added the impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings.

Towards the end of the century, events were moving in Paris, beginning with the storming and destruction of the Bastille and culminating in the Reign of Terror, a fear in aristocratic France of the populace and its demagogues, Marat, Danton, Robespierre and Fouquier-Tinville, and in democratic Europe of the little lieutenant of artillery. Politically, the eighteenth century closed in bloodshed. From the point of view of our present subject, it witnessed a degradation of fashion and of taste in furniture and decoration which extinguished all the finer traditions which had gone before. The " classical " atrocities of Hope and the absurdities of the " English Empire "—a blind worship of a style inseparably associated with England's most formidable antagonist—paved the way for the artistic depravity of the nineteenth century. The establishment of the French Directory marks the close of the Golden Age of English furniture, and to go beyond this date would only be to describe and illustrate examples which are monuments to our lack of taste, and which can be described as furniture, only by the straining of a definition to the breaking-point.

CHAPTER II

WALNUT FURNITURE OF THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WHILE it is impossible to write an account of the progression of English furniture types without some system which involves the division into classes—if the account is not to be hopelessly confused—one is faced with the inevitable disadvantage of such system, that the appearance is given of one fashion succeeding another, each being, for its own period, exclusive and supreme. This is far from being the fact, but if oak, marqueterie, lacquer, and walnut were jumbled together, illustrated side by side, the result would be incomprehensible. Yet this assortment must have taken place, literally. During the later years of the seventeenth century there were many concurrent fashions; one might almost say, no defined fashion at all. Here and there we meet with dated pieces, or with indications, either by way of the quartering of heraldic coats, or with inventories or other documents, which establish an actual year when certain pieces were made. We find, as the result of such researches, that oak, marqueterie, lacquer, or plain walnut furniture were made together, sometimes in the same district, and certainly at the same period. A little thought will show that this is not remarkable. Tastes varied in the last years of the seventeenth century, much in the same way as they do at the present day. Those who were "in the fashion" commissioned the elaborate marqueterie pieces such as have been illustrated in the previous volume. Others, of quieter taste, preferred the plain walnut veneer, or decorative effects obtained by the use of oyster-pieces of walnut or laburnum. Some, of conservative

habits, insisted on the sturdy English oak with which their fathers had been contented. The eighteenth century was much more the age of crazes than the seventeenth. From the accession of Queen Anne, until almost the end of the Georgian period, fashions among the wealthy became almost paramount. It is only with the furniture which was made for the nobility, the landed classes or wealthy traders, merchants or bankers, that we are concerned here, for the simple reason that the lower classes, as a rule, possessed little worthy of the name. They were contented with the pieces which they had inherited, or which had been discarded from the greater houses, and

Walnut Table: 2 ft. 6 in. Wide; 1 ft. 7 in. Deep; 2 ft. 4½ in. High; c. 1710. *(The Author.)*

this only in favoured instances. The greater bulk of the artisan classes owned very little which could be dignified with the name of

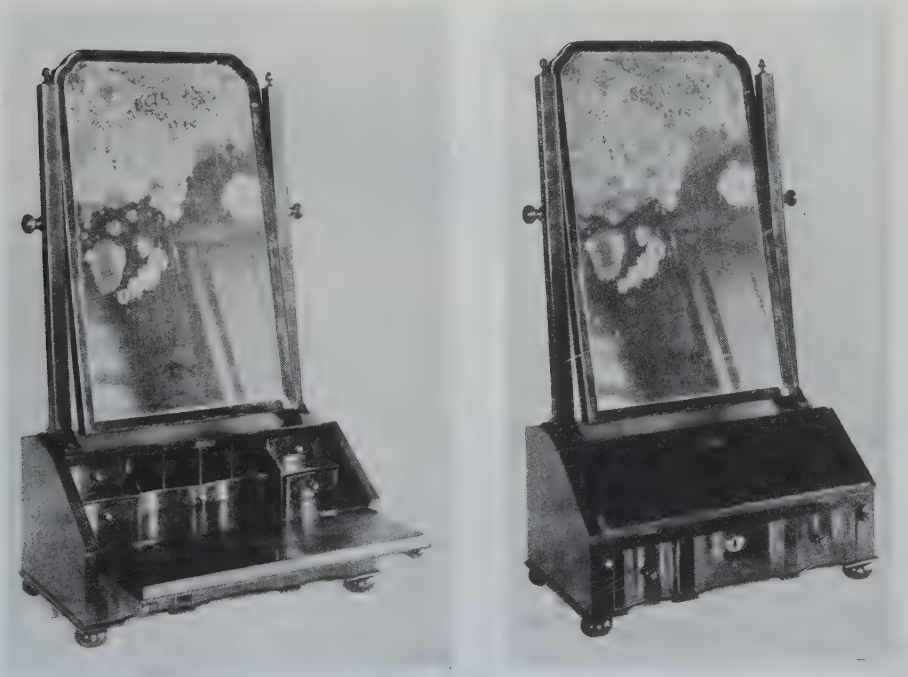
furniture at all; the rough productions of the local carpenter had to suffice for their needs.

Of this lower-class furniture very little has survived, and when met with, it is usually so archaic in form that it is usually referred to a much earlier date. There was no reason why it should have been preserved. Rough and crude, both in design and construction, it possessed little artistic or monetary value when it was made, and frequent changes of habitation (the lower the class the more nomadic) would soon reduce much of it to the scrap-heap.

Walnut Dressing Chest: 3 ft. 5 in. Wide; 2 ft. Deep; 2 ft. 8 in. High; c. 1705. (*The Author.*)

It must not be assumed, however, that *all* furniture made at a certain period, which was not in the prevailing fashions of its time, was necessarily of the common order referred to above. This is one

of the most important reasons why the system, which has been adopted throughout this book, is that of the dating of the inception of each particular fashion, and not the exact, or approximate, period when each piece was actually made. The former is practicable; the latter must involve an assumption of knowledge which no author can possess. It is somewhat curious to notice in how many instances, where the collector encounters dated pieces—and this is especially true of oak furniture—they hardly ever correspond with the years to which one would assign them, on the sole criterion of their general style. It is a mistake to assume that after walnut superseded oak furniture, the latter was never made. The older Stuart models were repeated,



Walnut Miniature Bureau and Dressing Mirror, Open and Closed; c. 1705.
(Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)

again and again, throughout the eighteenth century, if not even later. That much of this later copying originates from small provincial towns and country villages is extremely probable, but it must

not be assumed that the rural districts were, necessarily, behind the larger towns, in the up-to-date character of their furniture productions; certainly not in general standard of workmanship. At all periods, it is to the workshop with the limited output to which one must look for the most spontaneous creations in the way of furniture. The large factory, with the constant repetitions to which its size condemns it, as a rule, must stultify itself in consequence.

While the elaborate marqueterie furniture was necessarily more expensive than other pieces veneered with plain walnut, it is incorrect to say that the latter was made for a less wealthy class. Wages were so low, comparatively, in the eighteenth century, that the difference in cost would be almost negligible to a wealthy patron. It is true

Walnut Wing and Single Chairs Inlaid with the Device of Bowes (from a Set consisting of One Wing and Six Single Chairs), c. 1695. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

that wages had not touched the starvation-level which they reached one hundred years after the death of Anne, but all crafts, with the

possible exception of that of the goldsmith, were poorly paid in comparison with the cost of living. The Golden Age of the artisan, when eight weeks' work sufficed to earn the subsistence of a small family for the space of a whole year, had gone by three hundred years before.

The quieter taste, which preferred plain walnut veneer to the inlay of coloured woods, did not engender any radical departures in the general form of the furniture which was made. Thus, in the concluding years of the seventeenth century, the models differ hardly at all from those of the marqueterie pieces, as we have seen in the previous chapter. With the opening years of the eighteenth century, a quieter, and a far more coherent taste supervenes. Nothing is more typical of this period than the plain smooth cabriole leg. The earlier difficulties in the production of this form, already referred to, had been surmounted, and in this smooth cabriole we get the finest and most cultured expression of the chair-maker's art. That chairs and kindred pieces led the way for other furniture to follow is unquestionable; not only is the chair the earlier piece, as a rule, but it is nearly always more finely conceived and executed. That a perfect chair had a series of forerunners in the way of 'prentice efforts is probable, but the numbers of chairs which were made, in comparison with other pieces of furniture,

Walnut X *Chair, c.* 1700.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

would tend to engender greater skill, both in construction and design. Unfortunately, at the same time, the manifold repetition caused all chair styles to become depraved and mannered much more quickly than would be the case with other furniture, but this evil was partly counteracted by the amazing fertility in the production of new designs which is so characteristic of the chair-makers of the walnut and the early mahogany years. With oak chairs, within certain defined limits, the available patterns are soon exhausted. Anyone who has made a hobby of collecting photographs of oak chairs, stools and settles, over a period of some years, soon begins to look in vain for new models, which shall differ, in any important respects, from those which he has collected, pictorially. With the chairs of the walnut and mahogany periods, while there is the generic resemblance which one would expect, naturally, it is rare to find two alike, and when we do encounter them, the assumption is always that they belong to a divorced set. Even if we divide chairs into such broad classes as the hooped-back and the flattened top rail (where there is the widest distinction), the number of bridge-pieces—which not only belong to neither category, but depart from each in the most diverse fashion—which can be found is truly surprising. The period of Anne, and especially of the first Georgian years, was an age of design-invention, comparable with that of the

Walnut Chair. Central Splat Inlaid with Marqueterie, c. 1705. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

Types of Walnut Chairs of 1700-10.

Orange years, where multiplicity of patterns was the direct result of foreign influences introduced into England from many countries, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, and even from the Far East.

While the smooth undecorated cabriole leg is by no means exceptional on chairs, it is rarely found on other pieces of good quality. To anyone with a cultured and observant eye, a perfect cabriole makes an immediate appeal. There is a clean-bred

Types of Walnut Writing Chairs, 1700-10.

grace about the form which the slightest error in the fashioning mars irretrievably. The small table shown here on page 11 is one of these simple, perfect pieces which are the most difficult to copy, as there are no details of carving to hide any initial errors. In the hollow frieze of this table is a concealed drawer (which does not show in the photograph) which formerly opened by the impulse of a spring at the back, released by a catch underneath. This has disappeared long since. The table has its original varnish, now bleached to a pale golden shade, and with the exception of one knee-piece which has been replaced, is in its original condition throughout. As I have lived with this table for many years, I can claim to speak with some authority about it. Its clean simplicity of line has been a never-failing source of pleasure to me. I know something, also, of the difficulty of reproducing such a piece, as I have tried—and failed. It happened that I wished to

Beech and Walnut Chair. Parcel Gilt. Seat 1 ft. 9 in.; 1 ft. 6½ in. Deep Outside; 3 ft. 7 in. Total Height; c. 1700. (Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)

pair it with another, to occupy two recesses, but the copy no longer exists, as far as I am concerned.

To the same period belongs the small commode or chest of drawers on page 12. This has a pull-out slide of oak, probably lined with cloth or baize at one time, and was evidently made as a dressing-chest. It has the same cut-in corners as on the small table, and also a similar golden-bleached varnish. The piece is fitted with its original castors, and probably had, as an accompaniment, one of the small dressing-mirrors similar to the example from Lyme Park shown here on page 13. The miniature bureau to this dressing-glass is of considerable interest, especially to Americans. The shaping of the drawer-front below the flap together with

Walnut Wing Chair: 2 ft. 7½ in. across Front of Seat; 2 ft. 9 in. across Arms; 3 ft. 11¼ in. Total Height; 1 ft. 5½ in. to Top of Seat; c. 1700. *(Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)*

Walnut Chair. The Smooth Cabriole without Cross-Railing. The Type of 1705–10.

Colony, another original Dutch settlement.

This "block-fronted" furniture (to give it the name which our American cousins have coined to describe it), although by no means unusual in these early walnut pieces, is far less exaggerated in the English examples than in either the Dutch or the native American specimens. The detail is rare in English furniture of the mahogany years, whereas in the American pieces it is nearly always this wood which was selected. How much earlier, if at all, was those inside, all cut from a solid piece of timber and left straight on the inside, is a Dutch detail, not very pronounced, possibly, but one which was adopted by the early cabinet-makers of the Eastern States of America, as a favourite motive. The early settlers who helped to found what is now New York were nearly all of Dutch extraction, and gave their national character to much of the New England furniture which is now sought after by some American collectors. Similar pieces can be found in the older towns and districts of Cape

Walnut Chair, c. 1705.

Walnut Chair Covered in Needlework. The Smooth Cabriole of 1700.

these imports and charges did not interdict its use, to a greater extent than was actually the fact, is surprising, but the high cost of the wood must have operated in preventing unnecessary waste of timber. Hence, possibly, the reason why the solid block-front was never as general here, as in America, where the cabinet-maker was under no such disabilities of expense. The English equivalent, in mahogany, of the American block-front is the serpentine

the use of mahogany in the States than in England I do not know. Perhaps a student of American furniture can furnish the information. It must not be forgotten that mahogany, for some years after its introduction into England and its adoption as the fashionable wood for furniture—that is, from 1725 to 1747—was an expensive timber, as not only had it to be imported, but heavy duties were levied upon it. That

Walnut Chair. The Crested Cabriole of 1710.

Walnut Chair. Splat Inlaid with Marqueterie, c. 1700.

volume, that although many tentative attempts were made during the last decade of the seventeenth century, the smooth rounded cabriole begins only with the reign of Anne. The phase immediately preceding this was the square-cut leg of the form shown on the two chairs on page 14. These belong to a very interesting set consisting of seven chairs, one of the wing pattern and six without arms. The pendant discs below the seat-frames are inlaid with the allusive device of the Bowes shaping (which also involves a waste of timber in the cutting of this form), but shaped fronts are nearly always veneered. Whether this was an actual economy, or whether it was found that an acute shape, in the solid wood, involved the exposure of end-grain wood (as any boldly shaped surface must do), with its uneven shading when polished, it is difficult to say. Perhaps both elements dictated the necessity for veneering.

We have already seen, in Chapter XIII. of the previous

Yew and Elm Chair, c. 1760.

family, which we have already seen on the left-hand door of the marqueterie cabinet illustrated on pages 226 and 227 of Vol. I. The set was made, in all probability, not only to accord with the cabinet, but also at the same time and by the same hand. The wood is a similar highly bleached walnut, with an inlay of pale holly in the discs. The entire set, including the cabinet, were formerly in the possession of the Earl of Strathmore at Streatlam Castle, and for his family they were evidently made.

To the chair-maker the type of leg used here, which is merely cut both ways with the shaping-saw, is not only an embryonic cabriole, but also the work of one inexperienced in the later form. The

Walnut Harpsichord signed "Johannes Hitchcock. Londini."
(Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)

remarkable X chair on page 15, possibly a few years later in date, belongs to the same school. This is an exceedingly rare form for

this period, however, and is in no way representative of its time. Even in its dilapidated state, as represented here, it is a fine and exceptional chair.

The earliest smooth cabriole chairs and settees nearly always have the cross-railing tieing the legs together, an inherited fashion from Stuart times. That this stretchering was merely a fashion and not an actual necessity, for greater constructional strength, is indicated by the fact that the legs of the chairs on page 21 are of weaker

Walnut and Mahogany Harpsichord signed "Jacobus Kirkman. Londini. Fecit 1766." *Burr-Walnut Case Banded with Tulip and Satinwood and Inlaid in the Inside Panels with Marqueterie representing Tulips and other Flowers, and Musical Instruments. The Stand is of Mahogany, Carved; 7 ft.* 8 *in. Long; 3 ft.* 1 *in. Wide.*

form than those on the simple walnut model on page 22, as there is a loss of strength in the excessive curvature, with consequent cross-

grained wood, in the former which is absent in the latter, yet the stronger chair has this cross-railing with which the weaker dispenses. If there exist any breaking tendency, it must be in the outward splay, or thrust, of the four legs, and this the pegged-in railing would hardly prevent.

Two exceptional specimens of these early chairs with smooth stretchered cabriole legs are shown on pages 19 and 20. Both have the same peculiar feature of a separate lathing to the seat-rail, applied over the upholstery, the removal of which was compulsory with each re-covering. The small chair, now one of a pair, but formerly of a set of six or more, is of beech and walnut, with the small mouldings, on seat and back, gilded. The covering is a fine-stitch needlework, in the French style and probably of the same nationality. On the wing chair, which so closely resembles it in many details, the needlework is considerably restored, probably due to the greater use which a chair of this kind would get.

Walnut Wing Chair. The Cleft Cabriole Leg, c. 1710.
(*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

It is unnecessary here to describe each example illustrated in full detail, as nothing is more tiresome than a laboured explanation of points which are

obvious. It will be sufficient to indicate the introduction of each new type. On page 23 are two interesting chairs, the first of which has a strongly marked Dutch character. It belongs to the 1700 period, although the detail of the filling of the spaces between the central splat and the back legs with caning is very unusual. The second chair does not belong even to the first half of the eighteenth century, yet here is the smooth cabriole leg, with cross-railing all complete, persisting into the middle period of Chippendale. It is a reminder to the reader that the dates assigned to the pieces illustrated in this book are those of the inception of the various types only, and do not imply (other than in rare instances) an actual date of

Walnut Settee, showing the Cleft Cabriole Centre Leg. The Ear-Pieces are Attached to the Seat-Framing; c. 1700. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

manufacture. Without definite evidence, such actual dating is sheer absurdity. While the general style affords some vague indication, the

point must be emphasised here, that every piece should be judged by the latest detail which it exhibits, and in the case of this particular chair, it is the pierced and carved splats which are the true indication. For nearly two centuries the manufacture of chairs of this kind (which is merely the " Windsor " chair of commerce in an ornate form) appears to have been centred in Buckinghamshire in the district immediately around High Wycombe. While extremely conservative in many respects, the chair-makers of this district were the first to discover the possibilities of steam-bent timber, which they have exploited ever since. Yet this process (which can only be recommended on the score of cheapness of production) owes its origin to a section of a trade which, not many years ago, and possibly even at this day, was using the primitive pole lathe of the fourteenth

Walnut Settee. The same Cleft Cabriole Leg as on Page 27, but the Ear-Pieces are Below the Seat-Framing, and the Stretcher-Railing is omitted; c. 1705–10. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

century, in the surrounding woodland, resolving the timber into the component parts which the industry demanded, almost on the exact

spot where the tree had measured its length, when felled by the woodman's axe. This queer assortment of progression and retrogression is often found in the craft of the woodworker. Many writers on the subject of English furniture have assumed that each fashion died out so thoroughly that it was never revived, forgetting that for every prophet there are many disciples and a host of the unconverted.

Walnut Straddling Chair: 2 ft. 7¼ in. Wide across Arms; 1 ft. 10½ in. across Front of Seat; 8½ in. Wide at Back of Seat; 2 ft. 9½ in. Total Height; 1 ft. 6½ in. from Floor to Top of Seat; c. 1705. (Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)

As we are more immediately concerned here with the furnishing of the Old-World House (although I am afraid I have often overlooked the

fact in tracing the development of English furniture types), I offer no apology for illustrating two charming examples of eighteenth-century two-manual harpsichords, instruments which, while limited in many ways as compared with the modern piano, yet have a peculiar charm of their own, especially as decorative pieces of furniture, which the modern grand piano emphatically does not possess. My chief reason for illustrating these two harpsichords here is that, judging by the latest detail in each (which is the criterion suggested above), the first dates from *c.* 1700, the second from about 1720–30. Actually the first is dated 1760, the second 1766. The Kirkman harpsichord was made for Queen Charlotte and given by her to the Princess Amelia. It is a double manual, as nearly all these instruments were, with the usual small wooden "jacks" and quill plectra. It is regrettable that so many of these old harpsichords have been allowed

Walnut Writing Chairs. The Back of the One on the Left is Inlaid with the Device of the Ram Crest of the House of Lyme; c. 1705. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

to fall into decay for want of a little judicious (and not expensive) restoration. They were the instruments of Handel, Mozart, and

Beethoven in his early period. I have introduced the two here merely to demonstrate the difference between the dating of a new fashion and an actual example.

However marked the difference may be between the early harpsichord and the modern piano (and, considered as a musical instrument, the latter is, unquestionably, far the most perfect), the tone-quality of the former, where the strings are plucked with a quill, is totally different to that of the piano, where the strings are struck with hammers. There is the one vital distinction between the two, that the loudness of the note on the piano depends upon the force with which the key is struck, whereas, with the harpsichord, a violent blow produces no more sound than a gentle depression of the key does. It was this difference which earned for the one its name, pianoforte, i.e. *piano e forte*. Those who have been privileged to hear the violin accompanied by the harpsichord, as in the Beethoven violin sonatas, for example, and to contrast the latter with the modern piano, will have no two opinions of the tone-value of the one, as compared with the other.

Walnut Day-Bed, c. 1700. *(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)*

The upholstered furniture, wing chairs and settees, of the early years of the eighteenth century is effective in its quiet simplicity.

For unpretentious, but comfortable rooms, such as are to be found in our Old-World House, there is nothing more suitable. The easy-chair on page 26, and the two settees on pages 27 and 28, are admirable in their way. A new feature will be noticed here, the partial cleaving of the smooth cabriole leg at its knee, or junction with the framing of the seat. In the first of the two settees the knee is hipped over the framing; in the second it is below it. The precise turning of the stretcher-railing, in the former, shows the care which was taken with unseen, if not unimportant details, as the stretchers are hardly visible when the settee is viewed from a standing position. Probably some such consideration suggested their omission in the latter.

It should be unnecessary to have to point out here, that the modern "spring-stuffing" (where an additional resiliency was given

Walnut Settee, c. 1710.

to the seat, and sometimes to the back and arms, by the use of coppered steel spiral springs) was utterly unknown in the eighteenth century. The older equivalent of the spring-seat was the squab cushion, as on

the settee on page 27, sometimes filled with horsehair, more often with feathers or down. Original upholstery of this period is rare, as not only have the coverings perished, but the canvas and webbing have broken away, or been replaced, as the result of upwards of two hundred years of wear. The original webbing was generally broader, and stouter, than that in common use at the present day, and was nearly always of a brownish-white, instead of grey. There is little merit, however, in the preservation of original upholstery, as a chair or a settee is intended for use, and comfort is, or should be, the first consideration. One can hardly expect fabrics (other than tapestry or needlework) or upholstery to remain serviceable for a couple of centuries or more.

Walnut Settee. The Smooth Cabriole of 1710 *carried into the Early Mahogany Years,* 1725–30. *(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)*

Numbers of chairs were made for special purposes during the first half of the eighteenth century, the desire for originality even extending as far as the designing of chairs intended for straddling instead of

sitting upon in the ordinary way. The example on page 29 is intended for reading, being fitted with a strutted desk and two pivoted candle-sconces. There are also two boxes hinged to swing out, to contain writing and smoking materials. This chair has its original covering of polished black hide. Another variety of these straddling chairs had a higher back, cut out on the top edge in the form of a small crescent, in which the chin of the sitter—or the straddler—rested while intently watching a cock-fighting main. It may appear strange to modern notions that specially designed chairs should be made for such a purpose, but immense sums changed hands on these

Walnut Settee. The Double-Chair-Back Type with Back Legs Joined in the Centre. Cabriole Legs with Claw-and-Ball Feet and Escallop-Shell on Knees, c. 1710-15. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

" mains," and those who risked their money, and in large amounts, no doubt found these chairs of service. Perhaps also it was the " correct

thing" to have one's own cock-fighting chair. Like the bookmaker's white hat, it was a part of the game. A considerable amount of designing skill was expended on these straddling chairs. If we examine the one shown here, it will be found that in spite of its apparent ungainly form, every line and detail has been most carefully studied. They could only have been made

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Walnut Chair Matching Settee on Opposite Page.

Walnut Chair. Legs of same Type as the Chair below but with Decorated Club-Feet.

for wealthy patrons, which accounts, in all probability, for the care lavished upon them.

We find a marked tendency, during the first half of the eighteenth century, towards special types in furniture, a reaction, possibly, from the Stuart years when the one article was made to serve many purposes. We have the easy, or wing chair, the writing chair, and the straddling chairs just referred to, in addition to other types which cannot be illustrated

here, owing to space considerations. Thus, there is the gouty-chair and stool, for the greater comfort of the "six-bottle men," who appeared to have paid the price, cheerfully, for their intemperance. It was, essentially, an age of hard drinking. Those of us who have read, and remembered, the novels of Scott, may recall how Francis Osbaldistone escaped from the table to avoid one of these orgies, and was chased by his cousins through the house in fox-hunting fashion, for his abstemiousness. The "Whoop! stole away" of the disappointed squires when their quarry escaped them at last, is a striking commentary on polite manners of the eighteenth century, among the landed gentry.

Walnut Chair Covered in Needlework. The Smooth Cabriole Leg with Crest over the Seat-Rail, c. 1710. (*Frank Green, Esq.*)

Another curious type of chair, which is now rare, is the "horse," a large armchair with a seat upholstered with powerful springs, the border of the seat very deep, and pleated, accordion-fashion. These chairs were made to afford an imitation of riding exercise in the home. In the days when waterproofs and umbrellas were not yet dreamed of, a day of heavy rain (which is not entirely unknown in our English climate) was something to be avoided, if possible by staying indoors. These "horse-chairs" were utility pieces, entirely, possessing little decorative value, and no other use than the one for which they were devised. They have nearly all vanished, via the lumber room or the cellar.

We have already seen, on page 18, three types of writing chairs of this early walnut period, which have the merit of being not only

graceful, but comfortable as well. On page 30 are two others from the hall at Lyme Park. They were made for the house, although probably not at the same date nor by the same hand. The first has the device of the ram above a coronet, the crest of the House of Legh, inlaid in the back. It is instructive to note, also, how much finer this chair is, in its details, than the other.

The long couch or day-bed was a rare article of furniture after about 1690, although it was sparingly made even as late as the period of Chippendale. In the central hall at Nostell Priory is one which corresponds to other chairs in the house, in the full style of Chippendale. The piece is constructed as a settee, made to extend as a bed or long couch. None of the set is original to the house, however, having been purchased by the present Lord St. Oswald's grandfather many years ago in Wakefield. Of the one-piece long couches — differing from the French chaise-longue, which is compounded of two armchairs and a stool, in the greater number of instances — of the period of Anne, a good example is shown on page 31. The stretcher-railing is similar in detail to the settee on page 27. These patterns copied each other very closely at this period. This day-bed is early, both in detail and type. A piece of this kind may have been made for an invalid, perhaps for one of the gouty subjects of this date who sacrificed ease of locomotion to port wine.

Walnut Chair. The Crested Cabriole and the Broad "Fiddle" Splat, c. 1715. (*Messrs. Gregory and Co.*)

One is tempted to linger with these simple pieces of the early years of the eighteenth century; they are so simple, charming, and

Walnut Stool.

effective. Had it not been for the spur of fashion, ever demanding something new, the smooth cabriole leg would have remained in favour for a much greater length of time than it did. For the one of quiet taste, with an eye for perfection of line, nothing could be more satisfactory than the settee on page 32. The next example, while possessing much of the earlier character, carries us into the early mahogany years, as the flattened top rail to the back did not come into vogue until about 1730. But for the accident of this settee being of walnut instead of mahogany, and the persistence of the smooth cabriole leg, it could be referred, in its general style, to the decade immediately preceding the first London years of Thomas Chippendale.

The walnut double-chair-back settee from Lyme Park, illustrated here on page 34, is typical of the last years of Anne or the commencement of the reign of George I. The central uprights of the two backs are closely welded together at the top and bottom, the splats are broad, and the arm and its baluster reach from back leg to seat-rail in one unbroken

Walnut Chair. The Crested Cabriole with Claw-and-Ball Foot, Carved on the Knee with a Shell, Crested Top Rail to the Chair, and Broad Central Splat. The Type of 1710–15.

sweep. The swell of the cabriole leg leaves the seat-rail abruptly without curling over it as in the somewhat later fashion. The knees are carved with the escallop-shell—a favourite detail of this period—and the legs terminate in vigorously carved claw-and-ball feet, the virility of which (very different in appearance to the later tame convention of this form) is a sure indication of an early stage of this fashion. On the next page is one of the small chairs which belongs to the same set, and with it is shown one of the stuff-backed dining chairs of the same date.

Walnut Chair of 1710–15 *Type. One of a Set of Twelve in the Dining Room at Cassiobury Park, Watford: 3 ft. 3 in. Total Height; 1 ft. 10¼ in. across Front of Seat; 1 ft. 9 in. Depth of Seat Outside; 4-in. Border; 1 ft. 6½ in. from Floor to Top of Seat. (The Earl of Essex.)*

An alternative and somewhat later method of fashioning the cabriole leg was to curl the knee over the seat-framing, in the manner shown on page 36. This does not imply that these chairs are necessarily subsequent in date to those where the cabriole springs away abruptly from the seat; it is merely a later fashion which ran concurrently with the other, but without extinguishing it. The designer will appreciate that this curl over the seat-rail was a natural development. It completes the sweep of the cabriole, and was inevitable. With this beautiful front leg, perhaps the most perfect on the whole history of the English chair, it was felt that the former stump-type of back leg

was incongruous, and a judiciously modified form of the cabriole was adopted. In the matter of furniture one may have certain predilections for a particular style, which exclude all others, or may be catholic enough to appreciate the fine examples of all periods. To the latter there are certain English chair models which have an irresistible appeal. Many are merely tolerated as satisfactory; still a greater number are dismissed after a brief scrutiny. Rarely, however, the true collector meets with an example which is a veritable triumph, comfortable as a chair, and eminently satisfying when viewed from any angle. In an age of fine craftsmanship, and still finer design, such as the eighteenth century undoubtedly was, there are few chairs which stand out from their fellows in this pronounced way. I regard this as one, and we will see others in the illustrations to succeeding chapters. That it has not been improved by the addition of the piece of carving applied to the front rail over the needlework, is obvious. This chair is a lily which does not need painting.

Walnut Easy-Chair in Petit-Point Needlework, c. 1715.

The perfection, both in line and detail, of many of these chair models of the early walnut years, is, in itself, an indication of an extended period of manufacture, or its equivalent, an extensive output. That a larger number of chairs were made during the reigns of Anne and the first George, we can imagine from the number which have survived. Added to those

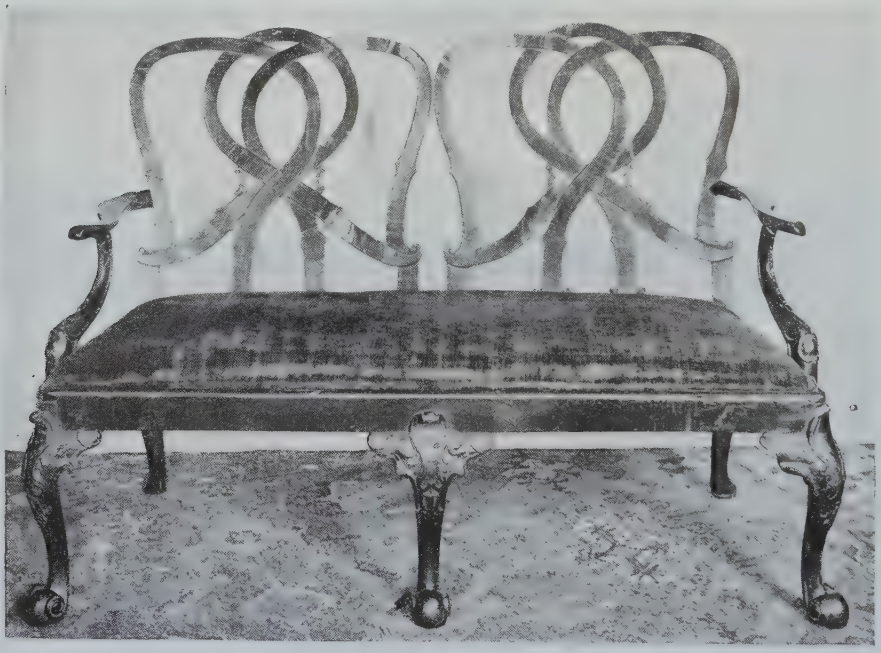
Walnut Chair.

The New Fashion of the Subsidiary Rail to the Backs of Chairs and Settees, with the Central Splat attached to this instead of to the Cresting-Rail; c. 1715–20.

Walnut Chair.

Walnut Settee Showing the Departure from the former Broad Central Splat Tenoned into the Top Rail of the Back; c. 1715–20. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

which have persisted to our day are many which failed to escape the neglect and destruction of the Victorian period. I have seen finely carved Chippendale *bergère* chairs where the feet have been cut off to lower the seat-height, to gratify the whim of the moment, as for nursing purposes, for example. With our present-day ideas of value, or, still better, of appreciation of fine design and craftsmanship, it is incredible that this eighteenth-century furniture could have been so neglected by our grandfathers. Nor was their contempt, or ignorance, confined to furniture alone. I remember, many years ago, it is true, seeing the remains of a fine set of cups and saucers, Chinese Famille Rose of the best quality, in a nursery, given to the children to play with, as the cups were too small,



Walnut Settee Showing the Fashion which begins about 1725 *of Forming the Back in a Representation of the Interlacing of Broad Tapes. This Furniture probably inspired the later Ribbon-Back, c.* 1750. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

and had no handles. How many pieces of fine walnut or mahogany of the eighteenth century I have found in basements and kitchen

quarters, in great houses, I would hardly like to say. In many instances this rare furniture was being neglected, while the atrocities of the Victorian era, huge dining tables, ugly chairs and sofas, and the appalling great gilt console tables and pier glasses, occupied the places of honour in the staterooms above. When I was a boy it was not necessary to possess money, in any degree, to acquire a collection of fine English furniture; the price of the hire of removal vans by the day or week was sufficient, coupled, perhaps, with something of the persuasiveness of Aladdin.

The chair on page 37 shows the next development in design, where the splat is narrower and where the uprights or prolongations

Walnut Card Table in the Saloon at Lyme Park. The usual Type of 1710 *with Carved Escallop-Shell on Knees and Plain Club-Feet.* (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

of the back legs, above the seat-rail, follow the curves of the splat itself. The chair and stool on page 38 have been selected as typical

models of this period. Many examples can be found which vary little, if at all, from these two. At the same time, they are eminently satisfactory, which is rarely the case when a certain pattern is often repeated. Another interesting chair is given on the next page, one of a set of twelve formerly in the dining-room at Cassiobury Park, Watford, the Hertfordshire seat of the Earl of Essex, but now dispersed with the sale of the estate. Here we meet with the effective feature of a small collar or ring round the leg-shaft, a few inches above the foot. Another chair, almost identical in detail, but not in proportion, has already been illustrated on page 22.

Chairs of this type, with broad, square, upholstered backs, must

Walnut Card Table. The Type of 1715, *with Crested Cabriole and Claw-and-Ball Feet.* (*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

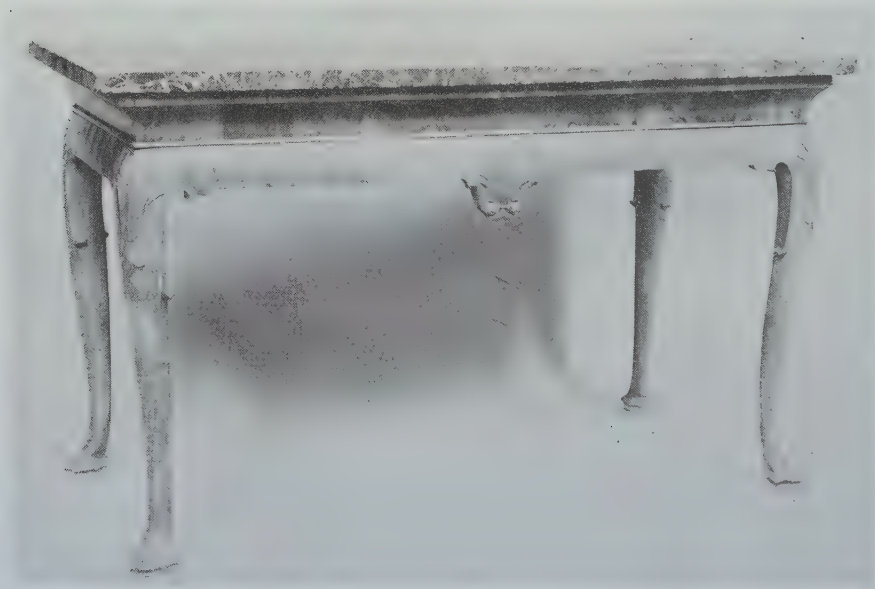
have been designed, in many instances, for covering in needlework. The Victorian, where he preserved these chairs at all, or considered

them worthy of a place in his dining-room, removed this needlework, which probably had become dirty, and required extensive and costly repairs, in many cases, replacing it with a covering of buttoned leather. I can remember one instance where the original needlework was not even removed, and was found under the leather when it was taken off. The wearing life of this fine woolwork is very great, with proper care and attention, but when exposed to damp or dirt, or, worse still, the ravages of moth, the canvas on which it is worked perishes, and restoration is almost impossible. That this gros-point or petit-point needlework was often the polite occupation of the wealthy lady, perhaps in a large country house far removed from the whirl of London fashions, we know from advertisements of " professors," who not only taught the art, but provided many of the designs. These professional teachers travelled up and down the country, with their stocks of master-patterns, and often left, in their train, identical designs, in places far removed from each other. The Victorian successor of these masters (or mistresses) of the needle's art was the sampler-working governess.

Walnut Card Table. The 1725–30 Type. (Major Norman Holden.)

We can now pass on to the next marked departure from the chair-fashions of this time, where the central splat is no longer connected to the top rail but either to a subsidiary one immediately below it (see the two chairs on page 41) or, in the more exceptional pieces, united by strapping-pieces to the outer uprights as in the settee below. The junction of the two chair-backs, in

settees, is now more disconnected than before. There is also another detail, in the later armchairs or settees, which is worthy of notice; the arm no longer sweeps in unbroken curves from back leg to seat-rail, but is formed of two distinct portions, the arm itself (which finishes, as a rule, in either a vertical or a horizontal scroll), and its baluster, which is shaped either in a simple sweep or an ogee form. Following quickly on this fashion comes another, where the central splat is abandoned altogether, and the back is contrived in various patterns of interlacings, similar to one formed by broad tapes (see the settee on page 42). This fashion of interlacing was long-lived, although somewhat sporadic. We shall see the device used repeatedly during the succeeding mahogany years, until the close of the Chippendale period. The figure 8 was usually adopted as the groundwork, and numbers of ingenious patterns were



Walnut Side Table with Top of Green Tinos Marble : 4 ft. 11 in. Wide ; 2 ft. 6 in. Deep (across Top) ; 2 ft. 11¼ in. High. (*Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.*)

contrived on the basis of this one unit. There is no reason to suppose that the numeral itself had any especial significance, or that

the designers of these chairs even had it in mind when they evolved their patterns. It is the only figure which is itself interlaced. That this settee is a much later piece than its general form, or the use of walnut, would imply is indicated by the design of the front legs and the carving of the arm-balusters. It is, in all probability, the work of a maker of the first years of Chippendale designing in an earlier manner. Both the settees shown here, on pages 41 and 42, are exceptional and magnificent pieces, such as our modest collector can hardly aspire to without great good fortune.

Leaving, for the time, this progression of chairs and settees of the early walnut period, we can turn back to the simple but effective tables and other pieces which were made to accord with them. Of these the card tables, which were much in demand in the

Mahogany Flap Dining Table. The Earlier Style of the Cabriole with Shell on Knee and Plain Club-Foot carried into the Mahogany Years, c. 1730. *(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)*

reign of Anne and the first of the Georges, are the most characteristic. The tops of these tables are generally of two patterns, with quadrant

corners, as on pages 43 and 44, or square, as on the next example. These corners were generally "dished" to hold the silver candlesticks of the period, with either square or round bases. In addition, four cups in the top, for counters or money, were also provided. The tops, when opened, were generally lined with cloth or baize, occasionally with velvet, and rarely with needlework. Of the latter I know only of two examples, of which the most celebrated is the fine table in the Long Gallery at Penshurst. Forgeries abound, however, and it is as well to be exceedingly cautious of these needlework card tables. It should be noted that tables of this form were often made with solid unlined tops, on which separate baize covers were placed for play, the idea being to permit of the cloth being changed, as a fixed lining soon became dirty, and these were the days of the long ruffle. I have nothing to say against these tables with solid tops, excepting that they have been "doctored" by the faker in so many instances, by cutting away the wood to a depth of about an eighth of an inch, leaving a surround to frame in a piece of

Mahogany Dining Table. The Shell-Carved Cabriole with Claw-and-Ball Foot, c. 1740–50. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

this modern needlework, faked to give a spurious appearance of age. No maker, other than a bungler or a lunatic, would construct a lined

top in this way, when he could take the flat piece and frame it with an applied lipping of stout veneer. I have never seen a lined card-table top without this veneered edging, and I do not believe that an original one exists. In addition, the veneer is *always* cross-grained (or "cross-banded," to use the technical term) and mitred at square corners, or radiated ("feathered") on round ones. This is as much a tradition of the trade of the cabinet-maker, and has always existed since veneering was first practised, as the use of the plane or the saw instead of the knife and fork, in the fashioning of timber.

A further absurdity, in many of these spurious needlework linings to card tables (which have been made on such an extensive scale, during recent years, that the frequency with which they turn up, in shops and auction rooms, should arouse the suspicion of any but the most gullible of simpletons), is the introducing of playing cards and counters or money, into the pattern. In these days of cheap auction bridge, where a few pounds, at the most, may change hands as the

Sabicu Dining Table. The Central Table of a Set of Three or Four. Showing the Composite Character of the 1740–50 Tables.

result of an evening's play, we can hardly appreciate the immense sums which were gambled away across these tables. It must be

remembered that money had a far greater purchasing value at this period than at the present day, but the gambling fever was so high in the early eighteenth century, that revenues and even estates were risked on the turn of a card or the throw of dice. With stakes of this magnitude, and with the necessary concentration on the values of the cards themselves, if disastrous losses were to be averted, it is inconceivable that the disturbing element of cards repeated in the pattern of the lining of a card-table top would have been tolerated, for a moment. The inevitable superstition of the gambler would have created a strong prejudice against such devices.

Walnut Cabinet, contemporary with the Later Marqueterie Period, c. 1700. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

In the chapter on "Types in Antique Furniture" in the first volume, it was pointed out that the sideboard, in the present-day acceptation of the term, did not exist in the early eighteenth century. Its prototype was the side-table, of the kind shown here on page 46. It was, truly, a sideboard, in fact as well as in name, although the later significance of the term, indicating a piece of furniture with cupboards and drawers, has obscured the earlier meaning. We shall see a great variety of these

side-tables in the later mahogany years, where they attain a considerable degree of elaboration. Side-tables of the walnut period, while less ornate, are much more rare.

One article of furniture which is conspicuous by an almost total absence is the dining table of the walnut period. That such pieces must have existed, and in considerable numbers, is certain, but what has become of them? That they were especially singled out for destruction is unthinkable. Two solutions to the problem are offered here. The dining table is not a piece of furniture intended for display; it has a definite use, and during such time that it was so used, it would, as a rule, be covered with a cloth. Bearing in mind that the notion of the "suite" had not yet arrived, it is possible that the large gate-leg tables of the oak period still continued in use. There would be little or no reason to discard them. The second answer to the problem may be this. Walnut was seldom, if ever, used in such big solid pieces as a large table top would demand. It is doubtful if English walnut existed, at this time in such sizes, at least to any extent. To veneer the top of a dining table, on which hot dishes would be placed, was impracticable, so another wood had to be sought. Tables with large tops of elm are

Walnut Double Chest of Drawers Veneered with Finely Figured English Walnut, c. 1700.

not exceptional, and may have been made, but as soon as mahogany was introduced it was recognised, at a glance, as the ideal wood for dining tables. It is significant that while we cannot accept a date much before 1725 for the introduction of mahogany into this country, it was known for a considerable period prior to this. Whether it was available, in any quantity, is another matter, but we are entitled to assume that its first use was for these dining tables. It is also remarkable that some of these mahogany tables, such as the one on page 47, agree, in point of design, with the earlier walnut furniture exactly. I have placed this table at *c.* 1730, *but only because it is in mahogany*. Had it been made from walnut, one would have placed it at least fifteen years earlier, and without hesitation. That the top of this table was originally rectangular, as in the next two examples, is almost certain, and that it was one of a set is also probable. The table on page 49, which is made of that exceedingly hard and heavy Cuban wood, sabicu (*Acacia formosa*), is obviously the central table of a set, as the small tongues which fitted into the top of the next section are clearly visible on the edge,

Walnut Secretaire Double-Chest. Rare Type with Bottom Drawer-Front Lunetted and Inlaid with "Sun-Ray" Marqueterie, c. 1710. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

in the illustration. In a later chapter will be shown one of these combined dining tables complete.

Of the other pieces of the walnut period illustrated in this chapter, a brief explanation only is necessary. The square cabinet on a stand fitted with drawers (as on page 50), is contemporary with the later marqueterie furniture. These cabinets were made as pendants to other pieces of similar form, from which they have nearly always been divorced at the present day. This was the age of the projecting chimney breast, which had been an unusual feature in the earlier Stuart house, and the demand was for two pieces, made to correspond, more or less, to occupy the recesses on either side of the fireplace. In the bedroom the place of these cabinets was taken by the double-chest, such as on pages 51 and 52, which were often made in pairs, but in the mahogany period the general fashion was for a double-chest flanked on the other side by a wardrobe with two doors above and

Elm Chest of Drawers on Stand. The Provincial Type of Late Date with Early Details, c. 1740. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

drawers below. Behind these doors were the familiar sliding trays. Hanging wardrobes are rare pieces until almost the end of the eighteenth century.

Walnut Double-Domed Bureau Cabinet. The Finer Type of the 1700 *Style. (Messrs. Gregory and Co.)*

In spite of the obvious drawbacks of the double-chest, where the contents of the top drawers had to be taken on trust, unless a chair or steps were available, they remained in favour during the greater part of the century, and a considerable amount of fine and costly work was lavished upon them. The early walnut examples, in their original condition, with the fine golden varnish of this period intact, are valuable articles of furniture, and one such as on page 52, with its fluted corners, finely fitted secretaire and lunetted bottom drawer is a desirable possession in our Old-World House. Chests on stands with cabriole legs, such as on page 53, are rarely of high quality and are nearly always of country make.

A somewhat barbarous custom, during the nineteenth century, was to take these double-chests and to add to each stage by fitting a base to the one and a top or cornice to the other, thereby making two chests of drawers of the usual height of such

pieces. There is a strong probability that this has happened with the chest on page 56, a gain in utility at the expense of integrity.

These double-chests are decorative pieces, and although possessing the disadvantage of the contents of the top drawers being, more or less, invisible to persons of normal height, the custom of placing them in halls or sitting-rooms, instead of the bedrooms for which they were made, originally (which may indicate a better appreciation of their furnishing value), has largely mitigated this defect, as, in these situa-

Walnut Bureau Veneered with "Tiger-Stripe" English Walnut, c. 1700
(*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

tions, the upper drawers would hardly be used at all. With walnut chests, the drawer interiors should be of oak, and of well-figured

wood. A drawer-side grooved for side runners always indicates a clumsy and coarse type, and should be rejected. Drawer-sides of deal, pine, or elm are also undesirable, suggesting common workmanship, and frequently a foreign origin. It may also be desirable to examine all remarkable details, such as cornices, splayed or carved corners, and elaborate bases, as so many of these double-chests have been " beautified " in recent years.

To conclude these early walnut types, one of the familiar double-domed bureau cabinets is shown on page 54. The details of this piece are exceptionally fine, and one well acquainted with the early long cases of clocks such as bear the names of East, Tompion, Knibb,

Walnut Chest of Drawers. The Plain Type of 1710, *made with Cornice-Top.*

or other renowned makers of their period, will notice the similarity between the cornice mouldings of these cases and this cabinet. One

of the small bureaux, also of fine quality, and two of the dressing-chests of this period, conclude the series of these early walnut examples, leaving the consideration of the later and more highly decorated furniture, that of the early Georgian period, for the next chapter. It will be found that after 1720 English furniture again assumes a decidedly heterogeneous character. Shortly after the death of Anne, the simplicity, which is so charming a feature of much of this furniture, departs, its place being taken by creations which, while more ambitious, are not always either as successful or as interesting.

Chest of Drawers Veneered with Oyster-Pieces of Walnut, Banded with Olive-Wood. The Elaborate Type of 1710. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

The original finish of this plain walnut furniture was a varnish, sometimes a mastic, more often a copal. When time and gentle

friction has resulted in a smooth almost glassy surface, and when light has bleached the varnish, we get that fine golden colour which is so prized by the collector. This esteem is principally because of its rarity, but all will agree as to the beauty and refinement of this golden shade, similar to that of the back of an old and fine violin. It also coincides with, perhaps, the best period of English cabinet-making, certainly with the greatest perfection in design. The Dutch bandy form had given place to the straight dignified cabriole leg, in chairs and tables, which is peculiar to English work at its best.

That this golden shade is in the varnish and not in the wood itself, many have found to their cost on taking the varnish off. No modern method can replace this fine colour or the original surface. The greatest care, therefore, should be taken that pieces with this shade and patine do not get into the hands of an ignorant restorer or workman. If the veneer should "bubble" (this furniture should not be kept under conditions of damp or extreme heat where this is likely to occur) it is possible for a competent man to reglue it to its bed with a cold adhesive such as Croyd glue. It may be necessary to lift the blistered veneer in order to insert the glue beneath, but a good workman can do this without injuring the piece. A veneering hammer, and, still more, a hot caul should be rigidly interdicted. This original golden walnut is not only a possession, of which a collector can be proud; it is, or should be, a responsibility, a legacy from bygone times with which he is entrusted, to live with, enjoy and be kind to.

CHAPTER III

FURNITURE OF THE EARLY GEORGIAN PERIOD

THE custom of designating certain furniture styles by the names of reigning monarchs has engendered the idea that a definite manner arose when each sovereign ascended the throne, and ceased, automatically, at the next accession. Nothing is further from the truth, especially during the eighteenth century. Even a new, and a foreign, dynasty, such as when the Elector of Hanover ascended the English throne in 1714, had no immediate or marked effect. The walnut models of the reign of Anne were still perpetuated, often with little or no modification. If the system of dating adopted here implied any actual period of manufacture, the years from 1714 to about 1740 would offer a hopeless confusion in examples of furniture. Even when the plan of dating the inception of each style is followed, there is the implication that one followed another in orderly progression, whereas several were strictly contemporary, even in the one district. Fashions jostled each other in these years, and it was not until Chippendale co-ordinated, in some measure, these earlier styles, that we get anything like homogeneity in English furniture.

We can begin to resolve this apparent disorder by dividing this early Georgian furniture into two broad classes: (*a*) That designed by cabinet-makers; and (*b*) by architects. There is some overlapping here, as certain pieces exhibit strong architectural influence, yet are too logical in character and design to be evolved by anyone unacquainted with the possibilities—and the limitations—of wood. There is a total disregard, or ignorance, of all woodworking traditions in many of the strictly architect-designed pieces, which is unmistakable.

Of the pieces produced by the joiner or the chair-maker unaided, a further sub-classification may be attempted, according to the general form (which is a very unsafe criterion) or the carving details which were employed. The latter is a much more reliable guide. These devices can be catalogued and dated, within somewhat broad limits, as follows:

(1) The eagle's head, usually as a finish to the arms of chairs, 1710–25.
(2) The lion's head, satyr mask or conventionalised human face, 1715–35.
(3) The lion's paw, as an alternative finish to the claw-and-ball, 1715–45.
(4) The cabochon-and-leaf on the knees of legs and on arm supports, 1725-70.

Walnut Double-Chair-Back Settee. The Seat is covered with Petit-Point Needlework of about the same Date. The Arms finish in Eagle's Heads, in the Fashion of 1715–20. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

As a variation of the first of these classes, side tables (nearly always gilt) were made where a top of marble on a square framing was sup-

ported on an eagle's outstretched wings. These tables are examples of bridge-pieces between the architect and the joiner-designed furniture of this period. There are numerous modifications, in each of the broad classes mentioned above, which we shall see as we proceed.

It is doubtful if the motive of the eagle-head was introduced into English furniture during the reign of Anne at all. A new monarch, and a new dynasty, may have been the incentive to devise something novel, although it is more than doubtful if the first of the House of Hanover did anything to encourage English handicrafts, even passively. His tastes were entirely German, with an especial predilection for elderly and ugly mistresses, which is not a characteristically Teuton trait—and he lived here for thirteen years, a foreigner in nationality and inclination, hardly acquainted with the rudiments of the language of his new kingdom, remaining, to the last, a nostalgic German princeling.

Walnut and Gilt Chair. The Scroll Motive combined with the Eagle's Head, c. 1725.

Of this eagle furniture five examples are shown here. The first is one of the double-chair-back settees with broad central splats, differing very little from those of the previous reign, excepting for the detail of the eagle-head as a finish to the arm. The settee below has the same motive not on the arms, but on the balusters, which sweep round in bold curves. The eagle-head is repeated on the central splats. On the interesting chair on page 61 the arms finish on the level of the seat-framing in vigorous scrolls, with turned pendants below and the carved eagles' heads above. The peculiar outward splay of the foot with long tendons finishing in the bird's

Walnut Double-Chair-Back Settee. The Eagle's Heads sweep round in Strong Curves, and are attached to the Arm Supports instead of the Arms. A Late Example of the Use of Walnut, probably about 1740. (*The Author.*)

claw grasping the ball is obviously designed in close imitation of the natural form. The massive rosewood writing chair on the next page

It is difficult to understand these writing chairs, where the seat is nearly always of normal height, in the absence of writing tables, with pedestals or on four legs, in the later style of the Chippendale years. As we have already seen, the usual form of writing desk was either the bureau or the upright secretaire cabinet with large square fall-front. Examples of both have been illustrated, already, in earlier chapters. In both, the height of the writing bed is one or two inches more than that of the usual flat writing table, which is later in date, probably some eight or ten years into the reign of George II., and the backward sweep of the arms, which can be remarked on the side view of the chair, was possibly dictated as a concession to the voluminous female skirts of the time. Writing was much more a feminine practice, if not an accomplishment, than a masculine one in these years.

Rosewood Writing Chair. The Arms sweep down to the Seat-Rail and finish on the Rail itself, in boldly carved Eagle's Heads. The Carving of the Front Legs is also exceptionally virile, c. 1735. *(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)*

may account for the fact that the bracket-plinths or the turned stump-feet of bureau or secretaire cabinet alike, are usually found cut down to nearly half their original dimensions. It is as if these bureaux were proportioned to the older Stuart chairs, which are frequently as much as twenty inches in seat-height, and the error only discovered when the chair two or three inches lower in the seat came into general fashion.

The two walnut chairs from Rainham, below, were made for dining-room use, and the set of ten may have been larger, originally, as a considerable amount of the Rainham furniture came from other houses, such as Balls Park, and the set may have been divided on

Walnut Arm and Single Chairs from Rainham Hall from a Set consisting of Two Arm and Eight Small Chairs, c. 1730–40.

3 *ft.* 4½ *in. Total Height;* 2 *ft.* 1½ *in. across Front of Seat.*

3 *ft.* 2 *in. Total Height;* 2 *ft.* 1½ *in. across Front of Seat.*

removal. It is more than probable that a table once existed which matched the chairs, but if so, it no longer exists in the house.

It is somewhat curious to note that if walnut dining tables, of large size, were made to accord with these cabriole chairs and side tables, as on this and the following three pages, for example, they no longer exist. The dining table of this period must have been of the multiple form, that is, several tables placed end to end with the tops secured together with brass clips; but even if the set became divorced, as so many of the later mahogany examples have been, one would expect to find the units persisting, even if the original rectangular tops had been cut to an oval or other form, to give a symmetry in this isolated form. Yet tables with solid wood tops of walnut are extremely rare, and the suggestion that they were sparingly made, in the original instance, is irresistible. I have only seen one complete walnut dining table of this period, in four sections, and, at the most, three or four

Walnut Sideboard Table, Marble Top. The Legs are Carved in Imitation of a Bird Form; c. 1740. (*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

flap tables which may have belonged to others. Yet of mahogany examples, which may date from ten to fifteen years later, at the most,

there is no scarcity. Every collector has seen them by the dozen or the score, from the simple straight leg with rounded shaft and club-foot to the ornate cabriole with ball-and-claw or lion's paw. The explanation of this rarity of walnut examples is due to the character of the wood itself. Walnut of large growth must have been almost unknown in the early eighteenth century. Where surfaces of any expanse are found, in the furniture of this period, they are always veneered. There must have been another reason for this than the mere custom or fashion for veneering. For carcase ends, the solid wood must have been preferable to veneers laid on pine or oak, had timber in sufficient size been available. It is not practicable to veneer the top of a dining table, as hot plates will cause the veneer to blister, so the only alternatives were to use another wood, such as elm (which was frequently used for cottage tables at this date), or to abandon the

Walnut Sideboard Table, Green Marble Top. The Frieze Inlaid with Flutes, c. 1725–35.

attempt to make a walnut dining table to match the chairs of this period.

It will be remarked, on close examination, that the finish of the cabriole leg with its claw-and-ball foot is much more naturalistic in the later pieces than in those of the years of Anne. In addition to the bird's claw, the scaling is also copied, as on the chairs on pages 63 and 64. On the fine walnut side table from the Victoria and Albert Museum, illustrated on the next page, the imitation is still more deliberate. The original use of the bird's claw may have caused the eagle-head to be evolved as a proper accompaniment. It is curious to note the inversion of the usual practice of the natural form becoming conventionalised with repeated duplication. Actually the claw-and-ball begins as a conventional detail, although vigorously treated in the early examples, gradually becomes more naturalistic, and reverts again to its former stereotyped character, with a considerable loss of the earlier virility. This walnut table is a late example of this middle period, well into the mahogany years,

Mahogany Sideboard Table, Tinos Top. Frieze with Grecian Key-Pattern in Fretwork, c. 1740. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

notwithstanding some early details, but the marked French character, especially of the central cartouche or cabochon, indicates that it

cannot date much before 1740, and may be even later. There is also a strong suggestion of a foreign carver's hand in the cutting.

These tables with marble tops are the true early Georgian sideboards, the day of the piece with drawers and cupboards being some thirty or forty years in the future. Occasionally, in important houses such as Houghton Hall, these tables were built up, masonfashion, entirely of marble, as an integral part of the furnishing of the stately dining-rooms, where comfort was sacrificed to dignity.

Mahogany Table with Marble Top: 3 ft. 4¼ in. Wide; 1 ft. 8½ in. Deep, Top Sizes; 2 ft. 6½ in. High; c. 1740. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

In considering these typical models of the later walnut period we have trespassed well into the mahogany years, which may be said

to commence about 1725. Mahogany is the timber of *Swietenia mahogani, Linn.;* a variety of the Cedrelacæa, a native to North and Central America. Mahogany has since been imported from Africa, but it is with that from America that we are concerned here. If it were possible to point out the differences between the mahoganies of Cuba, the Bahamas, Honduras, and other quarters of Central America, the information would be of great value to the collector in the detection of spurious pieces. Three distinct varieties of the wood were used during the eighteenth century, all of which differ, considerably, from any mahogany which is procurable at the present day, especially in the growth of the timber itself. From about 1725, when the wood came into general use (although a number of conservative makers still preferred walnut or oak), until the early period of Chippendale (1750), the San Domingo wood, straight-grained, heavy, dark in shade, and practically without figure, was used, almost exclusively. After 1750, until the end of the century, two other varieties began to be imported, the first a paler, and possibly a younger growth compared with the earlier "Spanish," with a fine rippled figure, the second the well-known curl mahogany, which is somewhat of a freak growth, and being extremely valuable, was seldom used other than in veneers. The age of some of the Cuba logs,

Walnut Chair (One of a Pair): 1 ft. 7½ in. across Top of Back; 1 ft. 11 in. across Front of Seat; 1 ft. 5 in. Depth of Seat; 3 ft. 4 in. Total Height; c. 1740. (The Earl of Essex.)

imported in the early mahogany years, must have been prodigious, as boards up to 4 feet, and even more, in width were not exceptional. There was no attempt at "quartering" in the cutting of this timber; the boards were cut straight across the trunk, nor am I aware that any other method is followed with mahogany. After about 1780 another variety of curl mahogany was imported from Honduras, and in the Sheraton period (1790–1805) some rich curls were often used which are not mahogany at all, but cedar (a wood not to be confused with pencil-cedar, which is an aromatic pine), although they were described as mahogany even at the time when their origin must have been known.

There is very little doubt that walnut was superseded by mahogany for certain definite reasons; it was not a mere arbitrary change of

Mahogany Arm and Single Chairs. The Last Phase of the Hooped-Back Chair, c. 1730. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

fashion. The latter was much the more expensive timber of the two, and remained so for many years. At one period heavy duties were

levied on its importation, yet this did not cause a reversion to the use of walnut, in any appreciable degree. Mahogany, after its introduction, remained the exclusive furniture wood for nearly

Mahogany Armchair. A Later Phase of the same Style as on the Opposite Page, c. 1735. (*C. D. Rotch, Esq.*)

seventy years. What were its advantages, when compared with walnut? The early Cuba wood was somewhat sombre in tone, and

certainly had not the ornamental appearance of figured English walnut, nor did it permit of the decorative use of marqueterie or fanciful veneering in oyster-pieces, radiating bandings, or quarterings.

Mahogany Chair. The survival of the Hoop-Back and Central Splat: 3 ft. 4 in. Total Height; 1 ft. 9½ in. across Front of Seat; c. 1735. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)

It is not until a later stage, when the finely figured mahogany was introduced from Honduras or the Bahamas (finer in figure but decidedly poorer in real quality of timber) that any attempt at patterned veneering began to be attempted, and, even then, the simultaneous importation of the curl mahogany rendered any attempts at quartering or radiating unnecessary.

Walnut has been condemned for its liability to the ravages of the grub of the Anobiid beetle, *Xestobium tessellatum* or *X. striatum*, and there is no doubt that many of the Restoration, Orange, or Queen Anne chairs are found, at the present day, riddled with worm. I have commented before on the fact that much of this walnut was of sapling growth, and the liability to worm-ravage may be due to this. Wherever copal or mastic varnish has been used, and it was nearly always the initial finish even of the early mahogany chairs—this tendency appears to have been increased. I have found mahogany chairs of

Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs. The persistence of Early Detail in the Central Splat, which is similar to those on Chairs of 1695. *These Two Chairs, although extremely similar, are not exactly alike in the Backs and are very dissimilar in the Seat-Framing and Legs and the Cresting to the Top Rails; c.* 1730–40.

Walnut Chair: 3 ft. 6½ in. Total Height; 1 ft. 11½ in. across Front of Seat; c. 1735.

the Hepplewhite period (*c.* 1780–90) affected in the same way. As we know from the instance of the roofs of Westminster Hall and Eltham Palace, English oak is by no means immune. There is one wood which I suspect to be the actual culprit, especially in the case of chairs, and that is beech, which was generally used for seat-framings. Walnut furniture, as distinct from chairs and kindred pieces, is either of oak, or, rarely, of pine or deal veneered. The wood itself is hardly ever used solid, possibly because of its comparative rarity, perhaps owing to its unknown qualities for carcase and constructional work. Worm is not unknown in this heavy furniture, but I do not think it is more frequent than with typical oak pieces such as dressers. Articles which are rarely moved, owing to their size and weight, should be the more likely to be attacked for this reason alone, yet chairs, stools, and settees, which are readily portable, are often ravaged by worm while the wall-furniture of the same period is unaffected. For chair seat-rails, beech was nearly always used, and beyond a mere

Walnut Chair. While differing in many Details, there is the same Tradition here as in the Chair above. This Chair is probably somewhat later.

(1) *The Fashion of the Interlacing Central Splat. The Hoop-Back Type of c.* 1735.

brushing with varnish, was left in a bare state. It is in these rails where the grub nearly always begins. The beetle can only lay eggs in a crevice, and the grub, when it hatches out, begins to burrow in the timber. It perishes if it reach the surface; it is the fledged beetle which, emerging from the chrysalis, hammers its way out by repeated blows with the point of its head, hence the name of "death-watch" beetle usually given to it. To attack the grub through the visible worm-hole is useless, therefore; the worm is not at home. It has become a fledged beetle and has departed to perpetuate its race elsewhere. This susceptibility of beech to the attacks of the wood-worm should have been suspected long ago, as the wood, even in the drying-shed or stack, is often attacked in this way. That the blame has been laid on walnut, when used in combination with beech or birch (another wood liable to worm), can be understood if it cannot be defended.

The introduction of mahogany does not engender any new style which can be associated, definitely, with the new wood. Fashions, such as that of the lion- or mask-carving, on tables and

(2) *The Interlacing Splat of* 1745, *a survival of the Hoop-Back.*

Mahogany Chair: 3 ft. 2½ in. High; 1 ft. 10 in. across Seat. The Development of the Chair on Previous Page. The School of Manwaring, c. 1755–60. (Victoria and Albert Museum.)

chairs, do arise in these early mahogany years, yet no style is confined to mahogany exclusively; there is no single manner, prior to 1750, and even later, which is not exemplified in walnut as well as mahogany, although not to the same degree. We have here not only a new timber to consider, but one which, at its introduction, abolished the veneering which was such an integral feature of the walnut years. We do find, in certain instances, a reversion to the simple types of the early years of Anne in some of this mahogany furniture, but these examples are nearly always comparatively late, from fifteen to twenty-five years after the wood had come into general use. Examples of this reversion to earlier type will be noticed, later on, in this chapter.

With a king so little in sympathy with the manners and tastes of his adopted country, it is remarkable that any development, as far as furniture and decoration were concerned, should have occurred at all. The artistic lethargy of Anne, how-

(3) *The Interlacing Splat of 1730, showing the Development towards the Flattened Top Rail. (Messrs. Gregory and Co.)*

(4) *The Flattened Crested Top Rail and Interlacing Splat of* 1740.

cession of the suspension of the heavy duties on the importation of mahogany, and using the new wood for the massive doors at Houghton. Following such a noted example, mahogany came into general favour as a furniture wood, and began to supersede walnut. In spite of the duties (which were reimposed after Walpole's needs had been satisfied), there was an important reason for the adoption of mahogany in preference to walnut. The former wood was new to England—and novelty ever, must have accustomed the English woodworkers to dispense with Royal support and to depend upon the aristocracy and the wealthy classes for patronage. Events were also transpiring in the years from 1720 to 1727 which had a profound effect on the furniture of this period. Sir Robert Walpole was building Houghton Hall, after his triumphant emergence from the championship of the South Sea directors—Aislabie being the only scapegoat of any note—and we find Walpole obtaining the con-

(5) *Flattened Top Rail and Interlacing Splat of* 1740.

(6) *The Interlacing Splat and Flat Top Rail of* 1745.

pearance of the plain timber. The solid mahogany also afforded a considerable scope for innovation in design, as with the figured walnut, the taste for large flat surfaces for its display also declined. Furniture made from the new wood began to rely more on carefully studied line, proportion, and detail of carving than on the piecing together of walnut burrs or oyster-pieces, or accidents of timber-growth, laid on large flat surfaces and further elaborated by the inlay of marqueterie or stringing. The large surface has always a charm—and the finer varieties, the "plum-pudding" and "ocean" figure, and the curl being unknown, veneering was unnecessary, and the cost of the process was saved to the joiner. This must have been a considerable item of expense when it is remembered that straightforward veneering with figured wood had been superseded by the elaborate parqueterie of "oyster-pieces" and similar methods of enhancing the ap-

(7) *The Maximum Elaboration of the Interlacing Central Splat. Note also the Scrolling of the Top Rail and Back Legs at their Junctions; c.* 1745.

itself tended to disappear. In place of the former panels in the doors of cabinets, glazing came into fashion, and as the cost of glass, especially in large sheets, was prohibitive, a system of latticing of broad astragal or other mouldings, ribbed behind into separate panels, which permitted of glass being used in small pieces, was devised. How this lattice work in the doors of cabinets and bookcases developed from the first square panes, and became an elaborate and characteristic feature of the later eighteenth-century cabinet work, we shall see in succeeding chapters.

To many (and I include among the number those who have a high appreciation of the decorative value of English furniture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) the problem of dating examples presents little or no interest. Yet if collecting is to lose its educational aspect (and in this the dating of pieces must be included), the copy is just as satisfying as the original, even if it be a mere jumble of anachronistic styles and fashions. Apart from the mere expert question of the genuine versus the spurious, which more often resolves itself into a matter of market value or monetary investment, there is a distinct educational value in the knowledge of the various styles and their phases, the spirited pioneer of a new manner and the later decadent —often the mechanically perfect— expression of the same fashion. Here there is scope for quick and trained discernment, a subtle appreciation of the importance of apparently trifling details. With English furniture it is a cardinal principle that any piece is no older than its latest detail. Those who resolve the subject into

(8) *The Final Phase of the Interlaced Splat in the First Years of Chippendale, c.* 1750.

definite classes, such as of Oak, Walnut or Mahogany, are apt to mislead the reader and the student. To say that mahogany, for example, became the fashionable wood for furniture after about 1725 (which is a fact) it is necessary to add the qualification that walnut was, by no means, entirely superseded. I have seen furniture of the Chippendale and even the Hepplewhite and the Sheraton periods in this wood. Here the general style of the pieces themselves precludes them from being mistaken for earlier work, but in the two or three decades prior to Chippendale there is a distinct tendency to date walnut pieces earlier than those in mahogany, on the sole criterion of the timber itself. The three sideboard tables on pages 66, 67, and 68, are typical examples of the assortment of early and late details. The first is of walnut, somewhat inspired from architectural sources, with the early details of the crested cabriole leg and the shell-carving on the knee,

(9) *The Interlaced Splat of* 1740 *on a Mahogany Settee. The Design of the Back, with Alternating Pierced and Vase-Shaped Splats, is very unusual. Note the Early Character of the Arms and the unusual Treatment of the Club-Feet. (J. Rochelle Thomas, Esq.)*

but with the mannered claw-and-ball which is rarely found in early pieces. The second has the Grecian key-patterned frieze of 1715–20,

the heavy paw-foot of the next decade, but the broad acanthus leaf of 1740. The early details in the third of these tables hardly need pointing out, in view of the illustrations in Chapter II. of this volume. The later characteristics are equally as unmistakable. The same

(10) *An Interesting Phase of the Interlaced Back. This Chair at Lyme Park has the Monogram C.R. introduced into the Central Splat. It is said that the Covering is a Portion of the Cloak worn by Charles I., and that these Chairs were specially designed to receive the Covering; c.* 1750–55. *(Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)*

assortment will be noticed in the design of the walnut chair from Cassiobury Park on page 69. In general form, this is an early chair, but a comparison between it and the lower example on page 78 will show that it cannot be before about 1740, and may be even later.

The hooped back to chairs and settees, of which we have seen many examples in the previous chapter, continued in favour for many years—in fact, long after the flattened top rail, which we associate with the designs of Chippendale, had become general, the hoop-back was again revived by Hepplewhite. The two chairs on page 70 may be accepted as marking the last phase of the form prior to the era of Chippendale. In this pattern the central cresting of the rail is depressed instead of being elevated, as in the older models, the back legs intersecting with

The Introduction of the Spiral Whorl or Scroll (1). *Mahogany Arm and Single Chair from Lyme Park. The Gradual Development from the Hoop-Back to the Flattened Top Rail* (*see Back View of these Chairs on Next Page*), *c.* 1735-40. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

the splat of which this cresting is an integral part, and finishing in carved scrolls. The next chair is a somewhat later development of the same

manner. With this fashion of the lavish use of the whorl or scroll (of which we shall see many examples later on), the central splat began to be pierced in many devices, chiefly of interlaced patterns. Another detail of this period, which will be noticed on several of the chairs illustrated here, was the palmette or fan-cresting of the top rail, as on pages 72 and 73. With this cresting we usually find a heavily shaped and carved front seat-rail. The seat-frame itself is generally straight on the front, as on the lower chair on page 72, more rarely gourd-shaped, as on the one above it. On the next page the palmette or shell is used both for the crest and the base of the central splat. While differing in many important details, there is the same influence evident in both the chairs on this page. The two are remarkable

The Introduction of the Spiral Whorl or Scroll (1). *Back View of the Chairs from Lyme Park* (*see Opposite Page*). *The Central Splats finish on the Seat-Rail at the Back, with a large Volute or Scroll. Note the Strong Outward Splay of the Legs and Slope of the Back.*

specimens of the designing skill of this 1730-40 period, and both are in walnut.

The carving of the front rail, or "apron," just referred to, becomes a distinct fashion, both in chairs and tables, in the years between 1720 and 1740, especially those from Lancashire, Shropshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Gloucestershire. With tables, the detail is often greatly exaggerated, until, shortly before 1740, we get the dropsical examples which are ignorantly known as "Irish Chippendale." That these tables have not even the remotest connection with Chippendale must be obvious, and, while often found in Ireland, it must not be forgotten that many of the large houses there were made the dumping-grounds for derelict and out-of-date furniture during the eighteenth century, in much the same way as many of the huge early Victorian pieces were exported to Peru a hundred years later. I have known of the latter being "discovered" and brought to England as rarities. Perhaps they

The Introduction of the Spiral Whorl or Scroll (2). *The Flattened Top Rail Scrolling at the Corners. The same Motive is on the Arms of the Lower Chair and on the Feet of Both. The Central Splat is nearly Straight, with Simple Vertical Piercing. Walnut persists here into the Mahogany Years, c.* 1730.

(3) *The Spiral Whorl or Scroll. Here the Top Rail is Crested and Scrolled at the Corners; c.* 1730.

is more intricate, and the legs are square, with the characteristic Chippendale open bracket at the corners. The example below shows the gradual change towards the flattened top rail of the 1740 period. The various phases of this interlaced central splat up to the first years of Chippendale are illustrated in the following six pages. The most interesting is the unique chair on page 81. The seat is covered with a beautiful material worked in chevron patterns entirely with the needle.

were regarded as Peruvian, yet the former are "Irish" on no better authority.

The piercing of the central splat begins, in hooped-back chairs, with the fashion of imitating the interlacing of a flattened cord or tape. Robert Manwaring and William Ince made effective use of the same device. To the school of the former belongs the interesting chair on page 75, which has the earlier style of cabriole leg with paw-foot, and the later development on the next page, where the interlacing

(4) *The Spiral Whorl or Scroll. The Goat-Foot of* 1695 *is perpetuated here. (James Stuttard, Esq.)*

Tradition says that this was a portion of the cloak of Charles I. which he wore on the day of his execution. It is highly probable that this is no legend, as these expensive chairs (there are several at Lyme Park) must have been made not only to use the material, but also to commemorate the ownership, as the cipher C.R. is incorporated in the design of the back. The chairs were made for the house, where they have been ever since. While of the early period of Chippendale, there is no trace of his influence, which would hardly have extended to Cheshire at this date. Much of the finer furniture at Lyme is quite distinctive in style, and may have been locally made. I have seen many evidences of the fact that Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire possessed craftsmen imbued with fine traditions, in the middle eighteenth century.

While it was possible, with chairs of the seventeenth century, to

(5) *The Spiral Whorl or Scroll. Walnut Settee: 4 ft. 6 in. Wide over Seat-Rail. An unusual Example of the Scrolled Fashion of* 1730–40. (*Messrs. Edwards and Sons.*)

resolve them into districts and localities of manufacture, the wider permeation of ideas and styles renders such attribution almost im-

(6) *The Scrolled Top Rail on a Walnut Chair of* 1745. *The Pierced Ear-Pieces to the Legs are exceptional. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

possible in the early Georgian years. The architectural style in English furniture was somewhat short-lived, but that is not to say that the activities of architects themselves were curtailed. Recognising that the knowledge of the craftsman was an indispensable preliminary to the successful designing of furniture, the architect (whose field was a much wider one than that of the master cabinet-maker) compromised by introducing his favourite makers into country districts often far removed from London. The work of Thomas Chippendale at Gawthorp and Nostell is an example of this in the later years of the eighteenth century, of which we possess actual records. That much the same practice must have been followed, in the early Georgian years, is suggested by identical pieces which are found in great houses, as far removed as Dorsetshire and Yorkshire. Nor is there any warranty for supposing that such pieces may have been made for London houses, and removed from thence to country seats.

The Development away from the Scroll Fashion. The Vase-Shaped Splat of 1730.

Records exist, in inventories and similar documents, which prove that furniture was specifically ordered in London for some of the large country mansions, and it is not unusual, as at Chatsworth, to find the steward's entries of the sums paid. That the architect of the house (these orders for furniture nearly always coincide with important structural additions or alterations) must have been instrumental in recommending a particular maker, there can be little doubt. Here and there, such as in the instance of the chair on page 81 or the remarkable settee on page 80, there is some reason for supposing that local designers or craftsmen were favoured (neither of these two can be described as being in the London manner of their period), but, as a general rule, the furniture fashions of the early Georgian period were created in London, and from thence dispersed to remote counties of England. An exception must be made in favour of the West Country, as Bristol, Bath, and Exeter appear to have possessed distinct schools of their own.

Walnut Settee of the First "Lion" Years. An early use of the Mask on the Legs of a Triple-Chair-Back Settee of Conventional George I. form, c. 1730.

To the student of English furniture and woodwork, the West Country has always been something of an enigma, from the fifteenth

The Set. Showing the Twelve Chairs and the Settee (see below and Next Page). The Fine-Stitch Needlework differs in Design with Each Piece of the Set.

to the eighteenth centuries. Devon, Somerset, and Western Dorset appear to have had highly cultured workers in wood at the time when their only rivals were to be found in East Anglia. It is somewhat difficult to apprehend the eighteenth-century equivalent of the modern

Two Chairs from the Set above (Photographed from Different Positions to show the Detail).

Mahogany Chair from a Set consisting of a Settee and Twelve Chairs (see Previous Page). The Entire Set is Upholstered in the Original Needlework which was made for it. The Full Development of the Lion Fashion, c. 1740.

factory on a large scale. The term "school" has been used advisedly, in these pages, to indicate a number of small masters centred in certain localities. Exeter, and in a secondary degree, Bristol, appear to have been the woodworking centres of the West Country, the former as early as the fifteenth, and both as late as the close of the eighteenth centuries.

The next phase in English chair-making which demands examination and illustration is the fashion for the use of the whorl or paper-scroll. These styles are coeval; they do not succeed each other, nor is there any evidence that separate districts had their favourite motives. It was simply a matter of personal taste on the part of the workmen, or possibly a shop tradition carried abroad into other factories as the apprentices departed as fully fledged craftsmen. The scroll is used in a variety of ways; it appears on the chairs on page 82 as a volute (similar to the return or side of an Ionic capital) at the base

Mahogany Table now used as an Altar in the Chapel of Rye Church. The Full Development of the Lion Years, c. 1735–40.

of the central splat at its back. These chairs, of which there is a large set at Lyme, in various rooms of the house, were the original

The Top of the Table below.

dining-room chairs, until their place was taken by others made some thirty years ago. The form of the back represents the last suggestion of the older hoop form. The central splat is pierced in a simple

Carved and Gilt Table with Gesso Top, c. 1740. (*Col. W. Selby-Lowndes.*)

pattern of four vertical radiating flutes, in the fashion of this time. The chairs are thoroughly representative of the first decade of the mahogany period.

How the scroll motive develops is shown in the next six illustrations, although we have already seen it in its fully developed form on pages 78 and 79. In the two fine walnut chairs, on page 84, which I saw, and admired, at Brympton Yeovil more than twenty years ago, the scroll is used also to finish the cabriole leg on the floor, a detail which is reminiscent of the Portuguese foot of Charles II.'s days, as illustrated in the later chapters of the previous volume.

There is a peculiar virility, a sense of power and even of motion in this scrolling which may have accounted, in a great measure, for its extreme popularity. In the walnut settee on page 86 the style becomes more refined, but with a notable decline in vigour of expression.

Carved and Gilt Stool (One of a Pair) matching the Table on the Opposite Page, c. 1740.

The next fashion which has to be considered is the use of the lion's head, satyr mask, or human face as a decorative motive in furniture.

The genesis of the fashion is difficult to trace. It is possible that it was introduced from Germany as a delicate compliment to the victor of Dettingen—certainly any novelty would have been thrown away on his father. The style begins about 1730, lasts for a period of upwards of twenty years, and then disappears, to be seen no more in English furniture. While the lion's paw is used as a finish to these chairs and tables as a logical accompaniment, this feature is somewhat older, and persists after the lion style has departed. While usually of mahogany, this lion furniture is sometimes found of walnut, and occasionally of beech, gilded. At its best, as in the fine card table at Penshurst, and in the remarkable set of chairs which are illustrated here on pages 89 and 90, nothing in the whole history of English furniture is more expressive in design and powerful in execution. It is a curious fact, and one which will be appreciated by the wood-carver,

Carved and Gilt Table. The Lion and Mask Period of 1735–40.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

especially, that every designer and carver has his own style or manner, which is noticeable in all representations of animal or human faces.

That this is the fact with conventional ornament, also, is probably true, but with a face we have the element of likeness, which is a quality

Mahogany Chair, with Lion Masks on the Knees; c. 1740.
(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)

recognisable by many who have no appreciation of design form. Many can name an artist, at a glance, because of this characteristic:

the men and women which the particular painter or illustrator delineates, however they may differ superficially, are still alike. This man wears a beard; the other is clean-shaven. This one is in rough tweeds; the other is in faultless evening dress, yet it is the same man every time; the unmistakable family likeness is there. Similarly with the wood-carver or the sculptor. Directly he conventionalises an animal head, no matter what the animal may be, he imparts a semi-human likeness to it which is apparent, at a glance, and it will be found that all these faces, whether human or animal, have a definite family resemblance. Examine the chair illustrated here on page 90. The masks are those of lions, nominally; actually they are human faces thinly disguised. Examine them attentively and then contrast the nine examples shown in these pages, and it will be found that the expression is nowhere the same (with one exception) on any two.

Mahogany Side Table, Carved with Human Masks on the Corners of the Framing and the Device of a Winged Hart in the Central Panel: 4 ft. 6 in. Wide; 2 ft. 2 in. Deep over Top; 2 ft. 9½ in. High; c. 1750. (C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

On the table and stool on pages 92 and 93 the likeness is identical. It may be urged that the two were made together, as part of the same

suite, and therefore the resemblance would be exact, but they are by the same hand, and *the carver could not help making the two with the same characteristic likeness*. If closely examined, the masks on the stool and table are not the same in detail. The difference is slight, but enough to alter the facial resemblance between the two if the one had been cut by a different carver to the other. That the chair, on page 90, had any association with the Penshurst card table, I have not the slightest means of knowing, yet on this facial likeness alone I have no hesitation in saying that the two were carved by the same man. Both are pieces of the highest quality, the work of a carver who must have been a genius in the use of the chisel and the gouge. The needlework in this set, comprising a settee and twelve

Mahogany Table with Marble Top with Lion Mask in Centre of Framing, c. 1750. (*Sir Lenthal Cheatle.*)

chairs, is original, worked specially for each piece in the finest stitch, and the design varies with each one. By a somewhat curious

An example of the simple furniture of the early mahogany years. An ingenious combination table, made for reading, writing, cards, and chess. The box, containing drawers and pigeon-holes, flies upwards when a secret spring releases it. This type was known as "Harlequin" Furniture, c. 1730–40.

Mahogany Chair. The Hoop-Back with Inverted Fan and Interlacing Splat below, c. 1740.

of the design, hipped over the seat-framing, and united to it with immense brackets. The legs of the settee are tame, by comparison. The designer has not known what to do with the lion's head, and the junction of the leg with the seat-rail has been awkwardly contrived. Equally as unfortunate is the scrolling of the arm-baluster.

The table on page 91, used as an altar in the chapel of Rye coincidence the Penshurst card table is highly exceptional in the top being lined with needlework.

To thoroughly appreciate the fine spirit in the designing of this remarkable set, it is only necessary to compare one of the chairs with the walnut settee on page 88. This latter is a piece of high quality, made from carefully selected timber and well carved. In the mahogany chair, however, the motive of the lion's head is used as an integral part

Walnut Chair. Another Version of the Chair above. (*Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.*)

Church, is undoubtedly the most remarkable of its kind in England. It is in massive mahogany, of a rich red shade, with its original varnish intact. Legend says (and the verger of Rye Church repeats it to all visitors) that this table was taken out of one of the Spanish Armada galleons. It is, perhaps, just as well for the church that this *is* a legend. Were it a fact, Rye would not possess almost the finest example of lion mahogany furniture in England to-day. I can bracket it only with the chair illustrated on the previous page, and the card table at Penshurst.

It must not be imagined that Rye is unacquainted with the value of the treasure which its church possesses, in spite of the Armada story; rather the reverse. It is as well to mention this here, in case any collector may be fired with the ambition to possess this table. The sums which have been refused, according to the verger, should have been sufficient to buy the ancient town itself.

Mahogany Armchair. The Commencement of the Fashion of the Cabochon-and-Leaf on the Knees of Chairs, c. 1735. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

Those who are acquainted with the exaggerated style of table known as "Irish Chippendale" (to which reference has already been made), will be able to trace a resemblance in this example. There is the same heavy carved "apron," on front and sides, although, unlike the feeble designing and ornamentation of many of these "Irish"

tables, the design and execution here are masterly. Equally fine in its way, although much more restrained, is the table on the next page with its stool to match. The wood here is beech, thickly prepared, and gilt. The top is decorated with a raised gesso, somewhat in the French manner. The carving, particularly of the pendant "apron" of the table, is executed with vigour and precision, with the finer detail cut into the thick preparation itself. Unfortunately, on the companion table to the one illustrated here, the gesso of the top has become detached in places, due to shrinkage or warping of the wood. It has been pointed out, already, that this original gilding is difficult to restore, as the stripping of the size and whiting preparation removes the delicate detail with it.

Carved and Gilt Armchair. The Fully Developed Cabochon-and-Leaf, c. 1740. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

There is a strong probability that many of the tables, especially the one on page 94, owe their designing inspiration to architects rather than to makers of furniture. The female mask in the centre of the "apron" of this table is, obviously, inspired from Classical or Italian sources.

Of the other notable examples of the lion years which are shown here, a detailed explanation is unnecessary; the illustrations are good enough to speak for themselves. They are

all remarkable pieces of a style characterised alike by its vigour and originality, yet which comes into existence suddenly, and dies out, all within a space of something less than twenty years.

A table of remarkable quality and design, still more suggestive of the so-called "Irish Chippendale" than the example from Rye Church, is shown on page 96. Here the masks on the corners are human, framed in vigorous C-scrolls. The framing, or "apron," is decorated with an incised trellis, in the French manner, a detail often found on "Irish" tables. In the centre is a large cartouche on which is carved the device of a winged hart. The timber is a hard close mahogany of a rich bronze shade. The top is also of wood, unlike the usual fashion of this date, where marble was nearly always used instead.

Another table, of much more simple type, but of equal quality,

Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs. The Fully Developed Cabochon-and-Leaf with Paw-Feet, c. 1740.

is shown on page 97. Here the top is of Tinos marble, with a boldly carved egg-and-tongue moulding under. The framing is edged with

a beading carved with the rose-and-ribbon pattern, and in the centre is a lion's head very finely designed and cut.

Fashion plays a much more important part in the development of English furniture than is generally supposed. Although "making for stock" (to use the modern phrase) was not a practice at this date, as the era of the large emporium was in the far-distant future, there was the endeavour to secure wealthy patronage by the issue of design books such as those of Chippendale, Ince and Mayhew, Manwaring and Hepplewhite, or by the display of models contrived in the height of the prevailing mode, or anticipating a fashion yet to come. To

Walnut Stool, showing a Variation of the Cabochon-and-Leaf; c. 1740.
(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)

repeat the patterns of years gone by would not have been an act of commercial wisdom in the eighteenth century any more than to

repeat the early Victorian furniture would be a good speculation at the present day. There are certain pieces, however, that follow the design motives of previous years, which were probably made to a

Mahogany Armchair, showing the persistence of the Paw-Foot in the Early Chippendale Years; c. 1750–55. *(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)*

special order, and here fashion would play no part; there would be only the idiosyncrasies of the patron to consider. If his furniture was out of date when it was made, that was his concern. According to the system of dating adopted here, of the inception of styles or

Mahogany Armchair, showing the persistence of the Claw-and-Ball Foot and the Scrolled Arm in the Early Years of Chippendale; c. 1755.

fashions, an exact copy of the first walnut years made about 1750 would be referred to the period of Anne; there is no other alternative. Yet these later copies, which occur in such numbers that they demand attention here, are rarely exact. Details are introduced which belong to their actual time, and these betray the later duplicate, in the majority of instances. Thus the interesting multiple table on page 98 cannot be earlier than 1730, and may be considerably later. It is of mahogany, which is the first indication, and the variety of purposes for which it is intended, cards, writing, chess, and reading, together with the system of containing the box, with the small drawers and pigeon-hole, in the body of the table, springing upwards when a catch releases it, all indicate a period later than the style of the simple smooth cabriole legs, with their plain club-feet, would suggest. For these pieces in which spring mechanism was employed in this way, the effective name of "harlequin furniture" was coined at the time when they were made. Sheraton illustrates several examples in his "Drawing Book." Others will be shown in a later chapter of this volume.

Side by side with these simple pieces, which perpetuate earlier styles, we find others where the design is quite individual and striking, yet from which there is little or no further development. The two chairs on page 99 are examples. I have seen, possibly, six or more versions of this design, with variations no greater than between the two chairs here, yet a considerable number appear to have been made, enough to show that the pattern must have been a popular one. Walnut or mahogany appears to have been used indiscriminately. These are rare chairs, although both the "faker" and the reproducer have turned their attention to this pattern during the past fifteen or twenty years, and examples have multiplied accordingly. The design basis is that of the hoop-back of Queen Anne days.

Round this particular pattern, which must have been exceedingly popular at its time, an amount of purely mythical romance has been woven. Even so acute an observer and so diligent a student as Miss Constance Simon, in her "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century," perpetuates the story (if she does not actually originate it)

Mahogany Chair. The Early Fashion of the Leg-Scrolling over the Seat-Frame, c. 1745 (Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)

yet sets of chairs do not easily disappear from such places without some enquiry. In addition, the pattern was a well-known one before Chippendale came to London, or Marie Antoinette was born, nor is it of the kind which would be made for a French royal palace.

Some mention has already been made, at the outset of this chapter, of the cabochon-and-leaf, which was adopted as a favourite, and general motive from 1725 to about 1770. In the first mahogany that Thomas Chippendale made a large set for Marie Antoinette, and that, with the exception of six which were bought for the Musée Cluny, the entire set found its way back to this country. It is hardly necessary to point out the many absurdities in this story. The French Queen could only have been twenty-four years of age when Chippendale died in 1779. The authorities at the Musée Cluny know nothing of the chairs; if they were ever in the museum, they are not there now, nor have been for many years,

Mahogany Armchair. The Early Detail of Carving in the Cresting of the Leg, c. 1750. (Miss Gregory and Co.)

furniture this detail is used in conjunction with the earlier forms, such as on the chair on page 100, where the cabriole leg curls over the seat-framing in the manner we have already seen before. The cabochon, or uncut jewel, is a device borrowed from France, but in the styles of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., it is nearly always used in a twisted or distorted form. On the gilt chair from Dudley House on page 101, the cabochon is on the junction of the arm and its baluster, and also on the knee of the cabriole leg. On the two chairs on page 102 it is elongated, and on the stool on page 103 the cabochon is disguised by leaf-carving. The same device is found on many pieces of the Chippendale period, and no fashion, perhaps, persists for a longer period. It is often a nice point to determine whether many of the chairs which have this feature are actually pre-Chippendale or no. Thus on page 104 is a fine chair of the first "Director" years, or possibly somewhat earlier, but the precise period of its style is difficult to state. Were it not for the paw-feet, which are not usually found after 1750, one would be justified in dating it after 1760 rather than before. The same combination of early and late details will be seen on the three chairs which conclude the illustrations to this chapter. The first has the claw-and-ball foot, which is not a Chippendale detail, although found in many chairs and tables made in his early London period; the second the French scrolled foot; and the third, and last, has many details which carry us back to the first Georgian years.

The development towards Chippendale and his style, which has been traced in these mahogany chairs, appears to leave little for Chippendale himself to accomplish. Actually, his "Director" style, which differed materially from much of the furniture which was made in the years from 1754 to 1770, constituted a definite departure from any models in vogue at the time. Chippendale was not the first, and certainly not the last, designer who endeavoured to revolutionise the artistic world of his day, only to find that between youthful promise and mature performance there is a world of difference.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FURNITURE

THE evolution of the early Georgian furniture is greatly complicated by the intrusion of architects into the field of the cabinet-maker or the designer of furniture. This architectural influence has already been noticed in much of the woodwork, panellings, and the like, of the later years of the seventeenth century. The architect begins to concern himself with this interior woodwork shortly after the Restoration, and here, partly from his pioneer character, perhaps from his ignorance of the possibilities and the limitations of timber, he achieves some very revolutionary results, such as in the Clifford's Inn Room, for example. It is not always the case that the untechnical venture unwisely; more often the man well acquainted with the materials and the methods of his trade is afraid to progress beyond certain defined limits, as much from mere conservatism—perhaps better known as mental laziness—as from over-caution—a fear of consequences. We must always remember that if the architect's large panels split, warped, or opened at the joints, he could always blame such defects upon the joiner, alleging bad seasoning of timber, or imperfect workmanship, whereas the joiner had to "father" his work without the possibility of throwing the blame upon anyone. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that recognising there was safety in the small panel, and corresponding danger in the one of large area, he preferred the former.

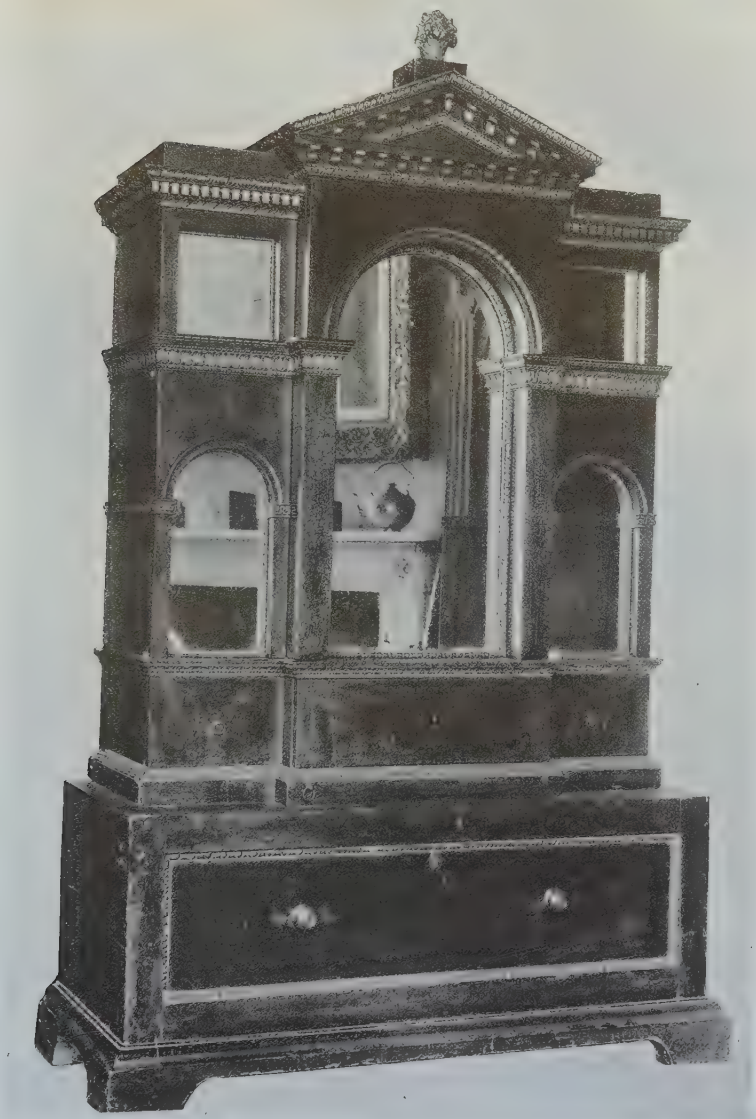
That the maker of furniture, in the later years of the seventeenth century, profited by this association with the architect, is unquestion-

able; he learned to adopt the strictly classical details in his mouldings, in place of the crude "scratched" sections, to which he had been accustomed, hitherto. The maker of clock cases was the first to adopt these finer, and more delicate details, and with the first walnut years of William III. and Anne, the cabinet-maker followed in his train.

So far, the new influence was for the good of the trade of the woodworker and the maker of furniture, but when the architect intruded still further, and began to design movable pieces, the benefit to English furniture began to be very dubious. It is in the second

Walnut Bookcase: 10 *ft. Wide;* 9 *ft. High. The Sash-Barring in the Doors is of Later Date; c.* 1720.

decade of the eighteenth century that this architect-influence begins to be distinctly noticeable, when we get pieces which can be more



Painted Deal Cabinet in the Architectural Manner of William Kent, c. 1720.

Mahogany Cabinet in the Architectural Manner of William Kent, c. 1720.

strictly described as buildings of wood rather than articles of furniture. Nowhere is the axiom, that the thing is compounded of its parts and depends upon them for its excellence, more distinctly falsified. These early architectural pieces are nearly always admirable in section and detail; it is in the assortment of these and especially in their relating proportions, that they are so unfortunate. Such as they are, they belong to the evolutionary development of English furniture, and must be considered here as a part of the subject-matter of this book.

Oak Cabinet in the Architectural Manner of Gibbs or Hawksmoor, c. 1725. (*H. Clifford Smith, Esq.*)

William Kent, the architect of Holkham and other houses of this period, was, perhaps, the worst offender in this field. His professional brethren were, possibly, no better fitted than he, but they were wise enough to be aware of their limitations, and to listen to advice from the cabinet-maker or the joiner. Kent had no such sense of deficiency. Popular acclaim hailed him as a wonderful designer —although posterity has not even accepted him as a great architect—and Kent furniture, wall-papers, decorative schemes, and

Mahogany Bookcase, c. 1745. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

Mahogany Bookcase. The Architectural Manner mingled with the Joiner Tradition, c. 1745.
(*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

even female costumes became the rage. It is better, perhaps, to be acknowledged by the multitude as a genius than to be one; certainly William Kent was of this opinion. With his elephantine notions of proportion, the evil would not have been so great had he confined his attentions to wall furniture, leaving such pieces as chairs and tables to more practised designers. There is nothing more grotesque in the history of English furniture than Kent's chairs, as at Holkham, Houghton, and elsewhere. It must be said, in common justice to other architects, that few followed him into this field. They recognised, possibly, that the designing of such articles was in capable hands, the province of a trade with centuries of fine traditions to its credit.

No new style, however evanescent, was ever introduced into an artistic trade without leaving some permanent impression behind it. The attention of the cabinet-maker once turned to the architecture of Greece and Rome, or to the Renaissance of Italy, such classical details as the pilaster, the capital, the truss, the console, the triglyph and others began to be adopted in the designing of furniture during the early Georgian years. There is another curious effect of this architectural revival; it began to be the custom for cabinet-makers to either describe themselves as architects, in their published books of designs, or to affect more than a nodding acquaintance with the Five Orders. Chippendale opens his "Director" with such an architectural dissertation,

Mahogany Wardrobe in the Style of Batty Langley, c. 1740.

Mahogany Bookcase. The Joiner Tradition, in the Manner of Batty Langley, c. 1745.

Mahogany Bookcase. The Finer Architectural Manner of 1760–70.
(*The Author.*)

and Sheraton professes himself a master of the subject. In the case of the former, there is more than a shrewd suspicion that these plates of the Five Orders were not from the sketches or drawings of Chippendale himself, but were the work of others, introduced merely to give an appearance of erudition to the book and the designs which it contained. Here again posterity has revenged itself by estimating the designs far beyond their true value, and ignoring the architectural plates. No one refers, nowadays, to the "Director" for the Five Orders, although they are set forth with considerable pains and skill.

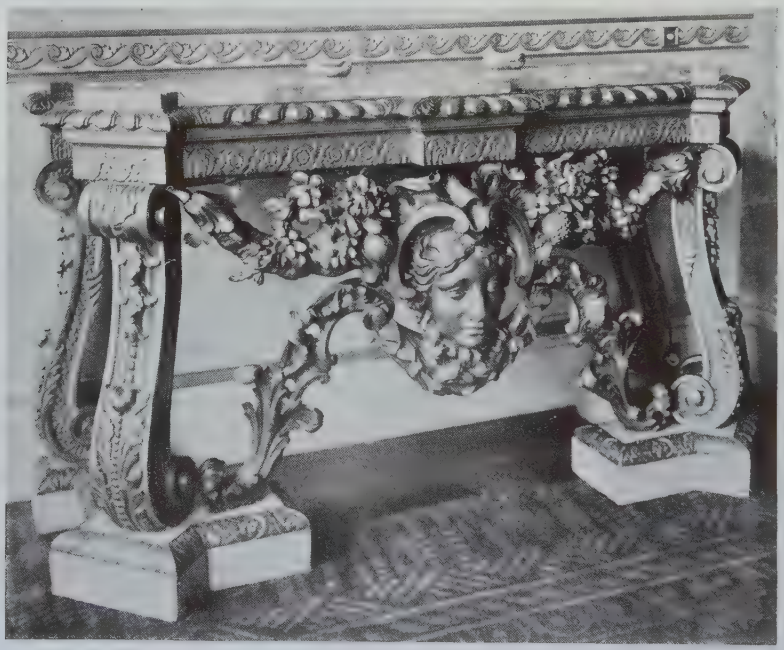
As already pointed out, the maker of clock cases, especially of those for "grandfather" clocks, was the first to avail himself of these classical details, and from the fact that the cabinet-maker did not follow in his train until some forty years later, we are justified in assuming that the making of these clock cases was the work of a distinct trade, with separate traditions, and possibly not domiciled in England

Walnut Hall Seat (One of a Pair) Designed by William Kent for Rainham Hall in 1720–25.

at all. We know that the earliest cases are of Dutch origin, and that there is no distinct break in the chain of development such as one

would expect had the trade migrated from Holland to this country. It is not until the later years of Anne that we find these long-cases definitely inspired from English sources.

The fine walnut bookcase illustrated on page 110 exhibits this architectural manner very clearly, yet in a way so refined that we cannot accept this piece as being designed by an architect. Here is rather the classical manner borrowed from the maker of clock cases. There are the same delicate types of detail, such as the cornice and the fluted pilasters with their carved capitals. The latter are of cross-grained walnut, built up from small pieces butt-jointed together. This is a cabinet-maker tradition, not what one would expect from an architect. Everywhere possible this piece is veneered with wood



Carved Wood Side Table (One of a Pair). Decorated in Cream and Gold. Numidean Marble Top. A Similar Table was Designed by Kent for Devonshire House, c. 1725. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

of rich figure, and all the mouldings are cross-banded, to add to the effect. Unfortunately, the sash-barring of the upper doors, and the

applied mouldings on those below, are of considerably later date, made from straight-grained mahogany. It is doubtful whether the early Stuart traditions of the joiner would have tolerated the opening of a door bringing with it the flanking pilaster, but the Georgian architectural manner engendered a good deal of laxity of principle in such details as this.

This piece is a bookcase, specifically, with movable shelves made to accommodate volumes of varying sizes, but whether the panels of the upper doors were of solid wood or of silvered glass, originally, it is difficult to hazard an opinion. That they were not of transparent glass is almost certain. The veneers throughout are of a fine golden shade, which we have already seen, in the second chapter of this volume, is characteristic of this early varnished walnut, where it has not suffered from the attentions of the "French" polisher.

From this fine walnut bookcase to the veritable building of wood, masquerading as a piece of furniture, on page 111, is an abrupt transition, yet there is a wealth of fine detail in this cabinet, although sadly

Carved Gilt Side Table with Marble Top in the Style of William Kent, c. 1725.
(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)

misplaced. There are also numerous ingenious contrivances, in the way of secret springs releasing drawers and cupboard doors, and the

workmanship is of a high order throughout. Originally painted with garlands of flowers and parcel gilt, the decoration is almost entirely obscured by a pustuled bitumen varnish which the atmosphere has rendered nearly opaque. The heavy box stand is not original, but has been " married " to the cabinet to accommodate it to a lower room. This base may have been similar to that of the cabinet on the next page, or it may have been placed upon a strongly-constructed table.

The next example is quite in the architectural manner of William Kent, similar, in general character and proportion, to pieces which still exist at Blenheim, Holkham, and elsewhere.

It is hardly just to condemn much of this architectural furniture when divorced from its original surroundings. With rooms of forty feet, or more, in length and from fifteen to twenty in height, it is surprising how much of the usual type of the eighteenth-century furniture appears dwarfed, and looks out of place. That this furniture

Carved and Gilt Eagle Console Table. Sienna Marble Top: 4 ft. 7 in. Wide; 1 ft. 9 in. Deep (across Top); 2 ft. 9 in. High; Base 1 ft. 11 in. Square; 2 ft 4 in. across Wings of Eagle; c. 1740. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

was never designed for rooms of this height or size is obvious, and that these enormous rooms are ever really desirable in any house which

even pretends to comfort is also very questionable, but in an age when these vast lofty apartments were demanded by the wealthy classes, in the houses which were built at this period, their ideal furnishing must have been an acute problem, as furniture which had, hitherto, been made for use, was out of the question. Shelves or drawers at a height of ten feet or more are sheerly impracticable, and any pieces which had to be designed for such rooms, had, perforce, to sacrifice utility to appearance, in fact, to cease to be articles of furniture at all, and to become buildings of wood. Here, perhaps, the architect may have been of real service, and he may have fared better than the cabinet-maker, whose notions of utility would have warred with the idea of mere size, with no definite function beyond that of appearance.

The chief defect of much of this architectural furniture is in the falsity of its scale. The oak cabinet on page 113 is a good example

Carved and Gilt Side Table with Marble Top. The French Manner which develops from the Architectural Style, c. 1745. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

of this. Were it not for the small vase placed on the akroter of the pediment, in the illustration here (which being a familiar article

indexes the size of the piece itself), this cabinet might be seventy feet in height instead of the seven, or thereabouts, which it actually is. Nor is this effect of oversize lost when the cabinet is seen in a room, in company with other pieces. There is a disturbing air of vastness, due to the use of details common to large buildings but rare on furniture. This appearance of undue size, however desirable in a building, looks decidedly incongruous in a room.

The publication of books of designs by cabinet-makers and builders, where the authors boldly described themselves as architects, may have been a kind of retaliation for the intrusion of the latter. Thus, Batty and Thomas Langley may have been indifferent architects—they are unknown by their works in this sphere—but as designers of furniture they occupy a position almost comparable with that of Chippendale. With their books there is also not the disturbing idea that they purchased their designs from elsewhere, putting their names to the creations of others, a suspicion from which Chippendale is by no means free. Between 1740 and 1750 the Langleys published no less than ten books, and four others had appeared prior to this. Batty Langley's "Treasury of Designs" (1740) contains many examples of a rationalised architectural manner in furniture, and he contributed a good deal not only to the inspiration of Chippendale, but to Hepplewhite as well. To Batty Langley's manner we owe such examples as the mahogany bookcase from Dudley House, illustrated on page 114. Here the cabinet-maker traditions and those of the

Mahogany Chair. The Development towards the so-called "Irish Chippendale," c. 1740.

architect are almost equally proportioned, but in the next example, from the same source, the cabinet-maker is in the ascendant. The absence of a frieze, and the awkward springing of the fretted pediment from the cornice moulding, with no apparent reason, suggest the joinerdesigning in a new manner, as yet imperfectly comprehended. Here again we have doors opening together with the flanking pilasters, leaving a gap below the projecting break of the cornice which is somewhat unfortunate. The same defect exists in the lower stage also, but here the sense of design and proportion is much better. The mahogany throughout is of fine quality, the lower panels veneered with thick curl wood, and the workmanship is exceptional.

Batty Langley, divorced from his architectural manner, can be seen in the wardrobe on page 116. Here are two details which, if he did not originate, he was the first to popularise: the bracket-foot moulded in the form of a dwarfed cabriole leg, and the internally shaped door-framing with a bold "fielded" panel to correspond. The somewhat coarsely designed bookcase on the next page is also in his manner, and from pieces of this type we know that the use of shaped ribbed lattice work in the glazed doors of bookcases or cabinets —although usually attributed to Chippendale—was already a trade practice some years before he left his Yorkshire birthplace to commence his London career.

This latticing of bookcase or cabinet doors begins in the first years of the eighteenth century. Books, which had hitherto been rarities even in the houses of the wealthy, were now becoming more general, and bookcases, such as on page 117, were made for them. It is doubtful, however, whether glazed doors to bookcases were not exceptional until almost the middle of the century. Cabinets made to contain and to display china are somewhat earlier. The Bow, Chelsea, and Rockingham potteries were all established shortly after 1740, and porcelain from China had been imported for many years prior to this.

In an age when sheet glass was unknown, and plate was exceedingly costly, crown was the only glass which could be used for glazing

these doors. Being made in circular discs with the "bull's-eye" left by the pontil in the centre, the sizes of the pieces which could be cut from these discs were strictly limited. A square pane of eighteen inches was exceptional. Lattice work, which with its ribs allowed of the panel surface being divided up into separate panes, was a necessity before it became a decorative device. The earliest ribbed lattice divides the door into a number of rectangles; it is only at a later date that any shaping of the ribs was attempted. It would be impossible without detailed diagrams to explain the constructional methods of latticing a door in this way, but the sash-barring of an ordinary window frame will show that the glass, the ribs, and the securing putty or beads all contribute materially to its strength.

Mahogany Table. The Development towards the so-called "Irish Chippendale," c. 1745.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

The outer, or moulded, ribs can only be fixed together by gluing each section at the mitres, and these would break away were it not for the

strengthening fillets behind. To make a rectangular lattice is not difficult, as the mouldings (usually of astragal section) can be worked in lengths, and cut up into pieces as required. The mitring at the intersections also presents no problem. With a shaped pattern, as in the bookcase shown here on page 117, the ovals, of which there are two in each door, have to be cut out with the shaping saw, and moulded with the "scratcher." (The modern method would be to oval-turn them on the lathe.) The half-ovals, of which there are four in each door, have then to be "halved" to them, and the vertical ribs mitred to the central ovals. The anthemion decoration, at the intersection of each oval and half-oval, is secured with an adhesive to the glass, without any ribbing behind. The complete lattice has to be intersected with the framing ovolo. The usual method is to fit a temporary wooden panel to the framing, and to build up the lattice on that. When completed, and glued together, the panel is removed and the ribs at the back fixed into position. The glass is then cut for each pane, and secured with beads or putty. When both

Mahogany Sideboard Table in the Full Style of the so-called "Irish Chippendale," c. 1740.

glue and putty are dry, the latticed door is strong, but before the ribs or glass are in position, the barring will break at the slightest pressure.

It will be seen, from the foregoing, that this latticing of doors of bookcases and cabinets is something more than a mere decorative device. At its inception it was both a necessity and an ingenious invention.

Occasionally, especially during the last forty years of the eighteenth century, we meet with pieces of furniture where many of the details of the previous sixty years are found together in the one example, such as the bookcase on page 118. That architects were responsible for such pieces is unquestionable, as, apart from the classical nature of their details, no cabinet-maker, with prevailing fashions to consider, would venture on such an assortment of styles. In this bookcase, the lower carcase copies a dado of *c.* 1700, the cornice is of the ultra-classical type of 1720, the frieze has a central tablet designed in the manner of the lion years (1730–40) flanked by an ornament of swags which belongs, somewhat, to the school of Hepplewhite (*c.* 1770). The latticing of the upper doors is in the style of Chippendale, the fluting of the splayed corners copies the detail of the trunks of the early mahogany long-case clocks, and the carved pateræ in the lunetted corners of the lower doors are in the style of Robert Adam. This bookcase is in the later, and finer architectural manner of its time, but where the designer of furniture has lent his aid in the details. Pieces of this degree of excellence, where the efforts of the architect and the cabinet-maker are happily blended together, are exceedingly rare.

The general character of much of this architect-designed furniture of the early eighteenth century is one of excessive, and unnecessary, clumsiness. Thus, on the hall-seat from Rainham on page 119 the arms, balusters, and legs are enormous, and the cresting to the back is overpowering. Made in stone, one would feel that the designer was at home with his material; with wood he is obviously out of his element. This excessive use of timber is also frequently allied with material weakness in construction, as in the two architectural side tables in Dudley House, of which one is shown here on page 120. Finely executed as this table is, no joiner would have designed the heavy female mask connected to the side trusses and their bases in this

manner. Unless reinforced from behind with metal such as iron or brass (an artistic sham which the brothers Adam did not disdain), the liability to breakage must be extreme.

The table on page 121 acquires a certain character of its own by reason of sheer bulk and weight. In any other than an enormous room it would be out of place, and it should be judged in relation to the scale of the surroundings of its period. That no joiner or cabinet-maker would design such a piece of furniture must be obvious to anyone.

It must be pointed out that while many of these early Georgian architects were unsuccessful with furniture, when compared with designers trained in the school of the cabinet-maker, with wall-panellings, chimney-pieces, and such fitted furniture as angle cabinets and china niches, they were distinctly in advance of the joiner. James Gibbs, the architect of the Radcliffe Library, achieved a deserved renown in this field, nor was Abraham Swan much his inferior. The "Designs in Carpentry" of the latter was published in 1759.

Among the many pieces which bridge the manners of the architect and the joiner are the eagle console tables, such as on page 122. With these tables there is the suggestion that they may be a logical development from the early Georgian furniture, where the eagle-head and claw are used as principal designing motives. If one be prepared to accept the convention of a heavy marble top, with its framing, supported only on the head and outspread wings of an eagle carved in wood, these tables possess a decided decorative value. They are nearly always executed with considerable skill and power.

The bracket form of console table is borrowed from French sources, although adopted, in England, with large modifications. The example on page 123 has many of these foreign details, especially in the inverted rococo bracket attached to the base-board, an entirely redundant detail. The fashion for the large pendant carved "apron," fixed to the centre of the top framing, will be noticed here. These aprons became very popular during the early mahogany years, both chairs and tables being designed with this feature, very exaggerated in the later phase of the style. To many of the mahogany tables of

the 1740-45 period, with these heavy and clumsy carved "apron-pieces," the term "Irish Chippendale" has been applied, an appellation which is as true as many of these coined names are, as a rule, these tables being neither Irish in origin nor Chippendale in influence. In this connection one is reminded of the story related of Professor Huxley, who was nominated as the arbitrator in a dispute. The question at issue was whether a lobster could be described as a red fish which walked backwards. The professor replied that a lobster was not red, it was not a fish, and it did not walk backwards, *but in every other respect the statement was strictly true.* Much the same may be said of this "Irish Chippendale." Of the "Director" influence there is not a trace, and all these tables, with their exaggerated "aprons," such as on page 127, are, without exception, nearly ten years prior to Chippendale's arrival in London. That many of these pieces are (or were) to be found in Ireland is neither remarkable nor indicative of Irish origin. The large houses of the "absentee landlords" there were known to be the dumping-grounds for much of the furniture which had outlived its fashion in England. There is no evidence to support any theory that these pieces are of Irish origin. The development of the style itself (if it can be dignified with any such name) can be traced, quite clearly, in such examples as the chair on page 124 or the sideboard table which follows it. That this furniture did not originate in London or the Home Counties is probable; it is more in the style of Cheshire or Lancashire. It is unwise to jump to the conclusion that furniture necessarily originates from the district or country in which it is found in the largest quantity. Of recent years, Peru and the Argentine appear to have offered an asylum to much of the clumsy Victorian furniture which a later development of taste has cast out of English homes. I have known of instances where this furniture has been re-imported as native Peruvian, with just as much reason as many writers have exhibited in the case of this "Irish" furniture. Names of this nature are deceiving; a "Bombay Duck" is not an Indian bird.

CHAPTER V

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE

MONG the many great cabinet-makers which England has produced, Thomas Chippendale is usually regarded as supreme. How much of his fame rests upon the merits of the furniture which he produced, or upon his folio book of designs, "The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director," in its three editions of 1754, 1759, and 1762, is a nice point to determine, and how far he was directly responsible for the actual designs in these books is also a matter for conjecture. If we are to do justice to the other cabinet-makers whose work has come down to our day (unknown to fame by reason of not issuing a glorified trade catalogue possibly), then Chippendale must be removed from the pedestal on which posterity has placed him, and relegated to a much more humble sphere.

Modern specialisation, which is the inevitable concomitant of mass (*i.e.*, cheap) production, has done more than any other factor to destroy fine craftsmanship. In the place of the older cabinet-maker whose versatility was very great, but whose output may have been limited, and whose work was undeniably costly, has arisen a class of specialists who follow in the wake of the machine. This man will assemble (he does not make, in the craftsman's sense of the term) chests of drawers. He can do this in the shortest possible space of time, but he can do little else in his trade. Mechanical processes of which machinery is one phase, have brought much within the means of the lower classes, which ought never to be there if the status of fine craftsmanship is to be preserved. However much one may

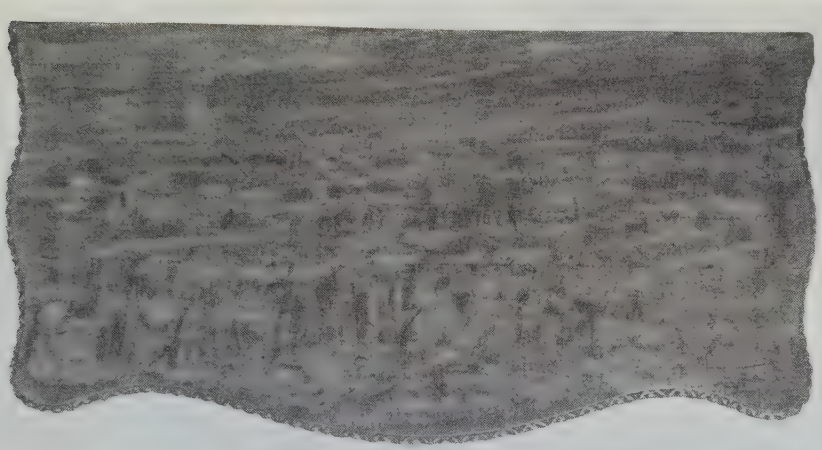
admire Leonardo da Vinci, for example, when one sees the Mona Lisa smiling from shop windows and drawing-room walls everywhere, one is tempted (without one shred of justice, I freely admit) to wish that Leonardo had never been born. If the art-work has one merit above all others, it must be in its individual character. That is why one's admiration for a well-designed lamp-post is tempered when there are streets full of them.

In the middle eighteenth century machinery was a thing of the distant future, and there was little commercial gain in producing a dozen pieces of furniture exactly of the one pattern. There was also a finer sense of creation which would prohibit any such wholesale

Mahogany Commode from Chastleton, Moreton-in-the-Marsh; c. 1755.

duplication. Not that a piece, if unusually successful, would not be made again; makers such as Chippendale were keenly alive to com-

mercial possibilities; but even then there would be an honest attempt to improve on the first, in the second or third, by alteration, omission,



The Top of the Commode on Page 132.

or addition. It was the age of fine craftsmanship because there was every encouragement to the good tradesman. His work was done, as a rule, for a wealthy and cultured class, which, if it did not directly appreciate, certainly did not hamper the creation of a fine thing by limiting its creator as to price. To say that the cabinet-maker of the eighteenth century was well paid is untrue; his desires were few, and his status a lowly one. But he was not compelled to use inferior timber because the best was too expensive; to mutilate his design by omitting necessary carving or inlay because the price did not admit of such extravagance. The traditions of the trade, which count for so much, were on a high plane, and it is for this reason, and not for any superiority in craftsmanship as compared with our present-day older school of cabinet-makers (a race which is fast dying out, unfortunately) that the work of the eighteenth century is justly prized by the discriminating collector.

Many fables have been woven round the name of Thomas Chippendale, which by "repeated iteration" have almost ceased to be

"alien conceptions." His Worcestershire origin, his father of the same name, his early arrival in London, and sundry pretty stories of his early tuition at his father's hands, are all utterly without foundation. By the researches of Mr. J. S. Udal, F.S.A. (himself an early believer in the Worcestershire tradition), the following facts have been established. Thomas Chippendale was born at Otley in Yorkshire, and was baptised there on June 5, 1718, so was probably born in the same year. He was the son of John Chippendale, a joiner of the same parish, who had married Mary Drake, the daughter of a local mason, three years before. We do not know when Thomas Chippendale came to London, but he married Catherine Redshaw of St. Martin-in-the-Fields at St. George's Chapel, Hyde Park, on May 19, 1748, in his thirtieth year. In the December of the following

Mahogany Commode from Rainham Hall: 4 ft. ¾ in. Long; 2 ft. Deep across Top; 2 ft. 8½ in. High; c. 1755.

year he commenced business on his own account in Conduit Street, Long Acre, removing to No. 60, St. Martin's Lane in 1753. In the

next year he published the first edition of "The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director," and in 1755, a fire in his workshop occurred "wherein were the chests of twenty-two workmen,"* an establishment of considerable size for this period. In 1759 appears the second edition of the "Director," followed by the third in 1762. In 1766 Chippendale advertises a realisation sale of furniture, consequent on the death of his partner, James Rannie, and the dissolution which this entailed. In September, 1772, Chippendale's first wife dies, and in 1777, on August 5, he marries Elizabeth Davis at Fulham. Two years after Chippendale is buried in the churchyard of St. Martin's (probably in the ground now occupied by the National Gallery), and as he dies intestate we are precluded from knowing the

Mahogany Commode from Rainham Hall: 4 ft. 6½ in. Long; 2 ft. 1 in. Deep across Top; 2 ft. 8 in. High; c. 1755. (Col. H. H. Mulliner.)

fortune, if any, which a fashionable eighteenth-century cabinet-maker could amass in a business career of some thirty years.

* *Gentleman's Magazine* of April 5, 1755, first referred to by Miss Constance Simon in her "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century."

Of his skill as a designer it is also not possible to speak with any authority. We know of no authentic work of Chippendale other than that at Harewood and Nostell, made under the supervision, and probably to the designs of Robert Adam. There is some individ-

Enlarged Detail of the Commode on Page 135.

uality, other than that of Adam himself, in the writing table in the library of Nostell Priory, but whether this is the influence of Chippen-

dale himself it is not possible to say. His published designs, at least those in the first two editions of the "Director," do not represent pieces which were made; Chippendale says as much in his Preface. It is only in the 1762 edition that we find any such mention as "this was made and gave great satisfaction."

Apart from this bid for custom which is implied in the text to the first two editions, there are grave doubts whether the designs here are those of Chippendale at all. The style of the engraving itself (which could not be Chippendale's work, as he was not an engraver on copper),

The "Director" Design, from which the Three Commodes Illustrated on the Three Preceding Pages were Inspired. This Design is from the 1754 *Edition, and is Repeated, without Alteration, in* 1759 *and* 1762.

is one which was familiar at the time, not only in other books, Ince and Mayhew, Lock, Copeland, and others, but also in the ornate

business labels which were such a feature of this period. What we know as Chippendale's French style is built up, in the main, on the use of two Flemish curves, the C and the S. It is a parallel development to the Louis Quinze, but is by no means a copy of the French manner. In the *Connoisseur* of April, 1922, an interesting article appeared on "Liverpool and Bristol Delft Tiles," from the pen of Mr. John A. G. Watson. In the borders of many of the tiles illustrated there can be seen the so-called Chippendale style fully developed, and they serve to show how general and popular this manner was. In the same magazine for January, 1922, is shown, on page 25, the business card of that versatile genius, Matthias Darly, who was responsible for the engraving of many of the "Director" plates, and those in other books of the same time. If one were tempted to assign an author to many of Chippendale's published designs it is to Darly that attention might be directed with good reason. The Chippendale plates possess both Darly's style and mannerisms, and, what is more important, they lack just that practical character which one would look for in Chippendale, yet would hardly expect from Darly. That some pieces were made after these designs is unquestionable; many are still extant, but whether they are the work of Chippendale (which may be the case) or of other competitors of his, whose names history has failed to preserve, is mere conjecture. I know of no single piece of authenticated Chippendale furniture which is in the style which we associate with his name. That he created any such manner is more than doubtful; he found no wilderness which he left as a cultivated garden. English furniture was in a highly developed stage when he came to London. He assimilated the styles which were in vogue at his day, and he gave them a permanent character in his books, and that was all. The "Chippendale" style is a convenient name; but for the "Director" it might have been known by another, if not by many.

That Chippendale occupied a place of considerable note in the furniture world of his time cannot be doubted. If I were tempted, on evidence other than conclusive, to assign any pieces to his workshop, then the three commodes illustrated in this chapter would be the nearest approach to actual Chippendale furniture which I should

select. The first came from a house at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and was sold at Sothebys. It was recognised, at the time, as a piece of

Lacquered Hanging Cabinet from Rainham Hall. One of a Pair; c. 1760-70.

unusually high quality, both in workmanship and design, such as would only have originated from an important maker. Within a year

the two others shown here turned up in the same rooms, from Rainham Hall, Norfolk, the seat of the Marquis of Townshend. The similarity between all three was too remarkable to escape comment. A search of the Rainham records produced nothing in the way of invoice, although a bill would only have been preserved by a fortunate accident. There was a strong suspicion also that the two commodes were not made for Rainham, but came from Balls Park, Hertfordshire, probably with a collateral branch of the family. These commodes are in the Rainham inventory of 1757, however, so they must have been brought there soon after they were made.*

Between the three, and especially the first two, is just the difference one would expect if they were made in the same workshop at slightly different dates. The Chastleton commode appears to be the earliest. The third has not been carved by the same hand as the other two; the style of cutting is more French in type. The chief points which establish the one workshop and nearly the same date are, first, the fact that the same set of templetes for the shapes has been used in all three, where a copy made by another maker would have been certain to differ slightly; and, secondly, the veneers are all from the same log, which suggests that they were all three made with only short intervals between. The handles also yield some significant indications. On the Chastleton commode they are very finely chased and delicately pierced. On the first from Rainham, which so closely resembles it, the metal is thicker, indicating that they were cast again, and on the second there is a new pattern entirely.

In the search for a maker for the three pieces (and there could have been only one, as we have seen), we turn to Thomas Chippendale, naturally. A small shop would hardly have been commissioned for work of this importance, nor would it have possessed a veneer-stock, from the single log, large enough for the three. If circumstantial evidence be worth anything, then here is actual Chippendale work. We may be quite certain that they date from after the "Director" of 1754, as there are similar suggestions there, but none which exactly

* They realised, at the Sotheby auction, June 24, 1921, 2,000 and 3,900 guineas respectively.

resemble any one of the three. These commodes must have been commissioned from the "Director" shortly after the first edition appeared, within a year at the utmost, as we know that two were at Rainham in 1757 and probably came to the house from Balls Park. Of the Chastleton commode nothing is known, although there are intrinsic evidences that it was the first made.

Having ventured so far in the realm of hypothesis, there was a pair of lacquered cabinets also at Rainham (one is shown here on page 139) in which I also suspected the hand of Thomas Chippendale. Apart from other considerations, if he was commissioned to make the two commodes, it is more than probable that these cabinets would be his also. Constructed each round a nucleus of four panels of Japanese workmanship, which form the back, there was an evident attempt at rivalry with the Oriental. These cabinets show English lacquer work at its meridian. Although the fashion had departed to a considerable extent, the art itself had not languished. For delicacy and precision of execution, and quality of groundwork, I know of no finer examples of lacquer made in England than these two cabinets. If Thomas Chippendale made them, and I am almost convinced that he did, his position among the great craftsmen of the eighteenth century is an assured one, and posterity has done him no more than justice in its posthumous valuation of his abilities both as craftsman and as designer.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORK OF THE CHIPPENDALE SCHOOL: GOTHIC AND FRETTED FURNITURE

TO credit Thomas Chippendale with all the examples in what is generally known as his style, which exist at the present day, to say nothing of those which have disappeared, would be an obvious absurdity. To adopt another procedure, one to which writers on this subject are extremely prone, of selecting the finest as his work, leaving the inferior examples to be fathered by other makers, is no less absurd, and unjust to the many minor craftsmen whose names have only come down to posterity in a haphazard way. To differentiate is impossible; we have no accurate standard to commence with. The wisest plan is to use the term "Chippendale" as indicating a school rather than a man. This method is also the most convenient. Even if we knew the actual makers of each piece illustrated in these pages, there would be little purpose to be served, and the greatest confusion would result, by naming them.

The Chippendale style, as we know it to-day, is compounded, not of one, but three distinct manners, the Gothic or Fretted, the Chinese, and the French. Further subdivisions can be attempted. Thus to the Chippendale school belongs the tripod table or pole-screen, and such pieces as the cluster-leg tables which are so characteristic of this period. Nothing of the kind had been attempted before, and until the Hepplewhite manner supervenes, what we know as the Chippendale style remains supreme in the fashionable world.

Chippendale found the cabriole leg with the ball-and-claw, lion's paw, or plain club-foot already well known when he came to London.

It is obvious that in his "Director" he regards all three as old-fashioned and out of date, as nowhere in his published designs does he use any of them. To say that he eschewed them in his actual work would not be accurate; he was prepared to give his patrons something new, but that is not to say that his manner was adopted to the exclusion of any other. It is more than probable that he reverted to the ball-and-claw and the paw in many of his chairs and tables.

There is, perhaps, no furniture of this Chippendale period which is more characteristic, and more wholly satisfactory, than the simple square-leg type, such as the two chairs and stool from a large set at Rainham, shown here below. Our modest collector cannot do better than to begin with furniture of this type. It is not expensive (it cannot be, as there is literally nothing that is costly in the way of carving on this furniture), it is simple and in good taste, and being devoid of ornament, with the exception of the simple piercing of the

Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs and Stool. Part of a Large Set from the Great Hall at Rainham: 3 ft. 2 in. High to Top of Back; 2 ft. Wide; 3 ft. 2 in. High to Top of Back; 2 ft. 1¼ in. Wide across Seat; 1 ft. 8 in. Deep; 1 ft. 10½ in. across Seat; c. 1755.

stretcher-railing and the corner brackets, it has to rely upon just and accurate proportion. To avoid the appearance of clumsiness, the

Mahogany Chair, c. 1755–60.

dainty hanging bookshelves with open-fretted sides or with shelves fitted between the squares of slender columns. Four representative examples are shown on pages 145 and 146.

The fret-saw, whether of the kind operated by hand, or the modern power-driven machine, differs in one important respect from the shaping-saw—that is, the old-fashioned bow-saw, or its modern equivalent, the band-saw—in its ability to cut enclosed designs, those which have to be commenced

inner edge of the square leg is chamfered away. The fretting of the arms and legs, in good examples, should be cut in the solid wood, which involves as a necessary consequence that no fragments should have fallen off. This cutting should be shallow, preferably, as a deeply cut fret does not look well. On this page are two more of these chairs, the first with a slight outward throw of the leg, and bevelled stretcher-rails, the second with a card-cut lattice on front legs and arm supports. Of the same early Chippendale period are the

Mahogany Armchair, c. 1755–60.

by the insertion of the saw in a hole, previously bored. Thanks to the popularity which fret-work has attained, as a hobby in the home, the operation of cutting is familiar to the greater number of people, and it differs hardly at all from the methods which were in use in the days of the Chippendale school.

Mahogany Hanging Fretted Bookshelves, c. 1755–60.

The modern band-saw is a continuous serrated ribbon of steel carried on two wheels, one above and the other below the bench on which the work rests while it is being cut. The "table" has a long slit for the passage of the saw. With this tool it is impossible to cut any shape other than one where the saw can enter and leave the wood without the necessity of being detached and re-fixed. The band-saw, being an endless ribbon, cannot be inserted in a hole in the wood. As an easily comprehensible illustration, this saw can cut a lunette, for example, or any similar shape which is not entirely circumscribed, but it cannot cut the interior of a ring.

Mahogany Hanging Fretted Bookshelves, c. 1755-60.

Mahogany Hanging Fretted Bookshelves, c. 1755.

from the bow-saw to the marqueterie-saw, the latter being the smallest known to the woodworker. Both the fret and the marqueterie saws are alike in being readily detachable from their frames, so that enclosed patterns can be cut. The frames of both are in the form of the loop of the letter **D**, the loop being shallow in the case of the fret-saw and very deep in that of the marqueterie-saw. The reason for this is obvious. It is almost unknown for a fret-work pattern to be in the centre of a wide panel, whereas, with the ground-

The old-fashioned bow-saw has similar disabilities. Although the blade of the saw can be readily detached from its frame, it is not a practical operation to insert it in a bored hole, and from this to cut an enclosed pattern. Apart from the fact that the blade of the bow-saw is too broad and the teeth too coarse, any interior cutting is, properly, the work of the fret-saw.

Shaping-saws, to which class the fret-saw belongs, vary in degree of fineness

Mahogany Hanging Bookshelves, c. 1760.

work of marqueterie a wide veneer is the rule rather than the exception. The depth of the D-frame of the saw must be rather more than one-half of the veneer or piece of wood, or it will be impossible for the saw to reach the centre; the frame will prevent it. In the case of the marqueterie-saw the very deep D-frame, which would be unwieldy in the hand, is carried in guides at the end of the cutter's straddling bench, or "donkey." The fret-saw, other than the power-driven kind, is held in the hand, as nearly everyone knows.

Mahogany Cluster-Leg Table, c. 1760.

As the fret-saw is an indispensable tool for the cutting of enclosed patterns, there is no question that it was known, and used, in Tudor,

if not in Gothic times. The mere presence of an enclosed device cut in the wood—and such are frequently found in Elizabethan furniture and occasionally in Gothic woodwork—is sufficient evidence of this. Where the pattern is pierced right through, there is no tool, other than the saw, which will execute it. Where the pattern is an application, there is the alternative method of cutting it in the solid wood with the carver's gouges. Some of the Chippendale applied

Mahogany Cluster-Leg Table, Originally at Dalham Towers, Westmorland; c. 1760. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

fret-work was actually done in this way, as we shall see, later on. It is possible that another form, known as the keyhole-saw, may have been

used for crude and simple interior patterns. This saw is a tapered piece of thin flat steel, serrated on the one edge, and held by a screw in a wooden handle something like that of a large bradawl. Being held at the one end only, the steel of the saw must be of a certain width and thickness to ensure rigidity, as if the metal be too thin, the saw will buckle up in use. For intricate enclosed patterns this

Mahogany Cluster-Leg Table, c. 1760. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

saw is useless, as it will not turn in a sharp corner, and the cut is too ragged. Its function, as the name implies, is to cut that part of a

keyhole where the wards of the key are inserted; the round hole for the barrel is bored as the first operation.

The blade of the fret-saw is thin, and it is secured at both ends, in its frame. To begin a fret, the pattern is first marked out on paper, and then pasted down on to the wood to be cut. The holes necessary for each enclosed shape are then bored, large enough to admit the saw and to allow it some play to commence the cutting. The saw must be detached and re-fixed at each hole.

Mahogany Two-Fold Screen, c. 1760. (Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

In the mahogany period of English furniture, which is considerably earlier than that of Chippendale, frets, whether open or applied, were always cut from veneers either in single thicknesses or in laminations of several. The usual plan, as in the case of marqueterie, was to cut frets in layers of six or more, with outside pieces of common wood to take the "rag" of the saw.

Unlike marqueterie, where the patterns are duplicated from the "master pricking" by "pouncing" (see the chapter on marqueterie in the first volume), the initial fret must be drawn out by hand. Once a fret is cut, it can be duplicated by a "rubbing." Probably everyone has amused himself, as a boy, by placing a thin sheet of paper over a recessed design, such as the tooling of a book-cover, and rubbing off the pattern with a soft lead pencil. The fret-cutter does the same, excepting that he uses a piece of heel-ball (a mixture of beeswax and lampblack, used by cobblers) in place of the lead pencil. A piece of thin paper, placed on the fret and rubbed with the heel-ball, should give an exact replica of the pattern which can be used for the next cutting. It is the test of accurate cutting that frets in succession,

Mahogany Two-Fold Screen, with Needlework Panels; c. 1755. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

on a ground or bed) which we find, at the present day, really dates from the eighteenth century, at least from the Chippendale period. In all high-class work the custom was to cut the fret pattern in the solid wood, the work of the carver using the rubbings of the fret-cutter. It is the later, and inferior method, when the discovery was made that a considerable saving of labour could be effected by gluing down a thin fret and thus dispensing with the aid of the wood-carver entirely. The obvious objection to this method each from the rubbing of the one preceding, shall show no variation from the original pattern, or distortion of the design. The rubbing reproduces all inaccuracies in the cutting with absolute impartiality, of course. After several cuttings and rubbings, the pattern finally left by a careless workman will be unrecognisable, when compared with the first cutting.

It is very doubtful if much of the applied fret-work (that is, where the pattern, in a single veneer, is glued down

Mahogany Two-Fold Screen, with Needlework Panels; c. 1755. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

is that these frets, no matter how well glued, have always a tendency to break away or fall off, especially when the piece is exposed to damp.

With open-pierced fret-work, as on the galleries of small tables, considerable strength, in apparently delicate frets, was obtained by the process of lamination. Three, or sometimes five, veneers were used, cut at the one operation, the grain of the central veneer being placed transversely to the others. It is surprising, to the untechnical, how strong three veneers are glued together in this way. Another method, with a gallery of the one thickness only, was to inlay a brass

Mahogany Table: 2 ft. 9 in. Wide; 1 ft. 10 in. Deep; 2 ft. 5 in. High; c. 1760. (C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

line on the edge, but this is inferior to lamination. Where these pierced galleries had to be bent to acute curves, such as on the corners

of the table on page 147, for example, the usual plan was to soak the fret in strong vinegar until it had acquired the necessary pliability, and then to bend it round a rod of the requisite thickness, binding a veneer with stout string until it had become thoroughly dry and "set." A certain amount of back-spring, or opening of the tube, on release, had to be allowed for.

Mahogany Book Table. A Similar Design is Illustrated in the "Director"; c. 1760. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

In good work, with an open fret of somewhat large design, it is usual to "clean up" the edges with a fine rasp, a flat file or glass-paper, to remove the saw cuts. With cheap work this is hardly ever done, and with a small and intricate pattern it is impossible. It is rare also in the case of frets which are glued down on a ground. The signs of the fret-saw are very evident, where they have not been removed with the file or glass-paper, and it is also possible, on a little acquaintance, to detect the difference between the cutting of the hand and the power-driven fret-saws. A sample of each, which should be procurable without much difficulty, will illustrate this distinction better than words can describe it. A knowledge of the two is important, as many "faked" pieces of fretted furniture are made with the frets cut by the machine, the faker being of opinion, probably, that the difference will not be noticed. It cannot be repeated too often, that the ability to detect forgeries of English furniture rests, in the main, on an intimate acquaintance with minute details of wood and workmanship. The "expert" who arrives at a decision on a mere cursory inspection, unless the piece be an obvious forgery, is merely guessing, and if his decision be adverse, he is trusting, as a rule, to the

chances being much in his favour. A small detail, such as the one mentioned above, must be conclusive; the power-driven fret-saw was unknown in the eighteenth century, and no expert opinion can gainsay this fact.

The greatest possible refinement was obtained in the so-called "spider-leg" furniture, yet the underlying principle, that a cluster of three or four slender columns fixed together and properly braced is as strong, if not stronger, than the same total thickness of solid wood, was well understood. Nothing, apparently, could be more fragile than the delicate table shown here on page 147, yet it has persisted for upwards of one hundred and eighty years. The maximum of strength has been attained by the lamination of the frets (they are in three or five veneer thicknesses, well glued together and with the centre or core laid transversely), but the principal reason for the survival of these tables has been that they are stronger than they look. With such apparent fragility no one would attempt to sit on a table such as this, or to place heavy articles on it. Its purpose was to display small articles of silver or china, hence the name of "silver-tables" by which they are generally known. Two other examples are given on pages 148 and 149, of which the last has had its fretted gallery damaged and cut flat as, possibly, the easiest repair.

Mahogany Artist's Table, c. 1750.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

This spider-leg fashion was also adopted for the small two-fold screens which were greatly in demand as fire-screens, to shade the powdered or enamelled faces of the beauties of this period from the direct

glare, one fold giving a support to the other; and as it was desirable that these screens should be readily portable, the maximum of attenuation was attempted. Three examples are shown here on pages 150 and 151. The last two have panels of petit-point needlework, while the first has the peacock wall-papers of the time, protected behind glass.

These early eighteenth-century wall-papers are of considerable merit and interest. As early as 1691 a grant of patent was issued to W. Bayley for a new process of printing in colours, by the use of several wood blocks superimposed in exact register. These papers were expensive, from twelve to sixteen shillings per yard, even at this date, when money had nearly four times its present-day purchasing value. Until a few years ago, original unused rolls of these eighteenth-century wall-papers were to be found, in country houses, where they had been stored, in all probability, in anticipation of repairs or replacements of papered walls which had been dismantled, and forgotten, long before. Their use for walls was impracticable, as the quantities were insufficient, but for screen panels, or framed and glazed as pictures, they had a decided decorative value. The designs, usually of flowers and birds, occasionally of Chinese landscapes and figures, were always well drawn and coloured, and the block-printing almost invariably

Mahogany China-Case, c. 1755. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

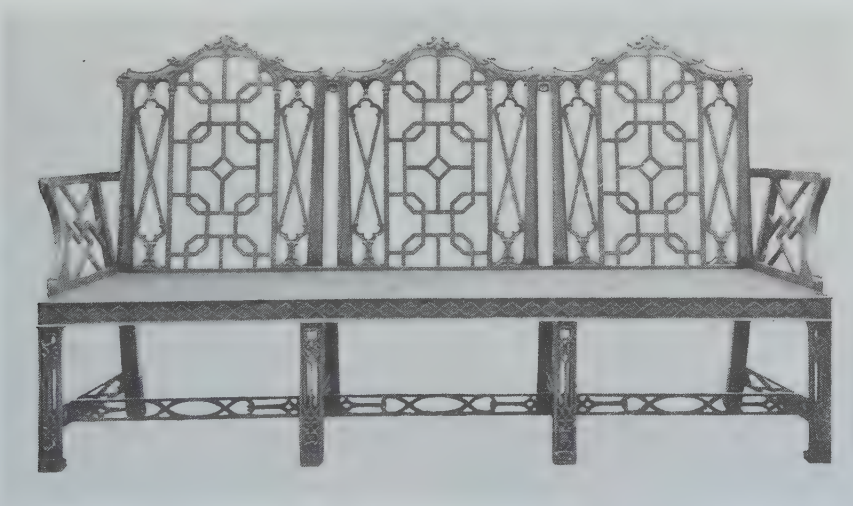
superb. They were greatly prized at the time when they were made, as we know from letters of the period, notably one from Lady Hertford to the Countess Pomfret in 1741.

In the collecting of this cluster-leg furniture the greatest discrimination is necessary, as the style was again revived during the years from 1870 to 1880, and furniture made forty to fifty years ago can acquire quite a respectable appearance of antiquity in this time. To one well acquainted with technical points, there are very material differences between the furniture of 1760 and 1870, but a mere surface appearance of age is no criterion whatever. Nor is design an accurate guide; many of the Chippendale models were copied in the most painstaking way—in fact, it was in these years that the "Director" again came into prominence, rescued from the obscurity of nearly one hundred years. The style soon ran riot in the direction of such articles as "whatnots," or *étagères* (small open hanging shelves), but any London cabinet-maker of the old school will remember the fashion quite well. Many very good copies of these silver-tables and fire-screens were made and sold by the long-defunct firm of Edwards and Roberts of Wardour Street; in fact, I can just remember when all antique furniture, from Gothic to Sheraton, was known, indiscriminately, as being in the "Wardour Street style."

Mahogany Armchair, Chinese Chippendale; c. 1755. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

Mahogany furniture of this 1870–80 period, during which the Chippendale style had a temporary revival, was always shellac, or "French" polished, but so great was the craze to have all furniture

finished like a sheet of glass, that many of the original pieces were stripped and treated in the same way. To differentiate between the 1770 original and the 1870 copy is not easy, therefore, and the expert has to rely upon such niceties as the type of mahogany which was used, and such details as veneer thickness and methods of cutting, and the carver's tools employed. The nineteenth-century wood-carver's chest contained a number of gouges which were utterly unknown in the eighteenth. There are other points which the collector will appreciate after he has trained his eye to observe, and has reinforced his observation by technical experience. One must always remember that the later work was produced much more cheaply, even when machines such as moulding spindles and power-driven saws had not come into general use in the smaller shops in which many of these so-called Chippendale copies were made. There is no finer training for the present-day collector (if he will descend from his eminence and forget, for a while, the jargon of the dealing



Mahogany Settee in the Chinese Chippendale Manner: 5 ft. 8 in. Wide across Seat; c. 1760.

trade) than to make the acquaintance of cabinet-makers and wood-carvers of the old school, and to listen carefully to their reminiscences

of the days long gone by. The old race has almost died out, unfortunately, and many have found their end in neglect and indigence. I can remember one old cabinet-maker (dead this twenty years or more) who, by thrift and industry, had accumulated a modest competence, but who, to the last, remained in harness in his Spitalfields shop. He had an almost uncanny acquaintance with furniture woods, their nature and treatment. I have seen him take a board of sound pine, of some twelve inches in width, rip it up with his saw in three pieces in its length, reverse the central one and glue them together again. It was not until many years afterwards that I found the same treatment recommended by that practical old craftsman, Thomas Sheraton, in his "Drawing Book." My old cabinet-maker could tell if a mahogany log would "open" figured or plain before it had been sawn into planks or boards, and he knew just how to cut it in such manner as to secure the most perfect figure. Thirty-five to forty years ago the finest work was made for City firms which have all disappeared. Cooper and Holt of Bunhill Row was, perhaps, one of the best, and the last of these firms to go. Contemporary with them, in their prime, were Wright and Mansfield, Johnstone and Jeanes, Jackson and Graham, Morant Boyd and Blandford, Holland and Son (a firm still in existence), and Gillows, who all produced cabinet-work fit to rank with the finest productions of the eighteenth century. Smaller shops also abounded, but they have all been stamped out by the modern commercial rush for the cheap and the "mass production," to give

Mahogany Chair (One of Four) in the Chinese Chippendale Manner, c. 1760. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

to the million that which only the million can appreciate. With this digression, however, it will be as well to return to our subject.

The chamfering of the inside edge of the square leg of chairs and small tables, while giving an appearance of greater delicacy, did not result in any loss of strength. Thus the small table on page 152 is a very happy example of the skill in the designing of simple pieces in the years from 1755 to 1765. The legs are moulded on the external faces with the double ogee and central bead (which we have already seen in the linen-fold panels of the sixteenth century) and are chamfered at the back. The corner brackets are simple, but skilfully designed. In the pembroke or book table on page 153, the legs are chamfered on each corner to an octagonal section, stopped in the Gothic manner under the drawer-rail. Another method was to build up an open fretted leg on two sides only, in L section, sometimes cross-stretchered to give additional strength. Some of the drawing or artists' tables were constructed in this way. Drawing and painting in water-colour was a polite occupation of ladies in the middle of the eighteenth century, and small tables for the purpose were made in numbers, and often on a very elaborate scale. They are frequently described as architects' tables, although there is no reason for believing that they were ever made for drawing-office use. The one shown here on page 154 has no such appearance, certainly. The top is hinged to allow of sloping to different angles, with a framed strut behind for its support. The entire front of the table pulls forward, opening at the mitres of the legs.

Mahogany Armchair in the Chippendale Gothic Style, c. 1755.

Mahogany Chair in Chippendale's Gothic Manner, c. 1755.

often used with derision than respect. This was due, in a large measure, to the use of the name "Gothic" at all to designate the new manner, which was responsible for such monstrosities as Strawberry Hill, the home of Horace Walpole, who was, himself, one of Batty Langley's severest critics. The term "Gothic Taste," according to Chippendale himself, implied little more than the use of the carved or applied fret, and the pointed-arch tracery or and disclosing divisions and receptacles for colour bladders and drawing utensils. At the sides are small slides for water-vessels or candlesticks. A good deal of effective, but expensive, work has been lavished on this table, in carving and fret-cutting.

The so-called Gothic of the Chippendale era was merely a travesty of the old English style. Batty Langley, rather than Chippendale, was the responsible father of the style, and his name, in connection with it, was more

Mahogany Chair, c. 1755. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

Mahogany Armchair, c. 1760. (*Major Norman Holden.*)

as in the Chinese taste at its period, yet it is both charming and useful for the purpose for which it was contrived. That the Chinese chairs and settees of this period, as on pages 156 and 157, sacrificed a good deal to the manner itself is unquestionable, yet in their proper surroundings they can be both charming and harmonious. That they are not to the taste of everyone is obvious, but this is mere personal predilection, not criticism. To many, even the finest examples of English furni-

lattice work in the glazed doors of bookcases and cabinets. The "Chinese Taste" (also referred to with scorn by many of Chippendale's critics) was only the use of the pagoda in furniture such as cabinets, the open fretting in the backs of chairs, and the introduction of Oriental figures into many of the elaborately carved rococo mirror frames of the time. It was, no doubt, ingenuity in design perverted, but it was ingenious, undeniably. Thus the cabinet on page 155 would have been described

Mahogany Armchair in the Chippendale Gothic Manner, c. 1775. (*Major Norman Holden.*)

ture have no appeal. In the chair on page 158, which is in the more restrained version of this Chinese manner, the workmanship, detail, and proportion are all of the highest order. Originally a set of six, they have been dispersed. Sir John Ward has four, and Sir Ernest Cunard the other two. There is an opportunity here, apparently, for a little diplomatic negotiation.

In the opinion of some competent authorities, the name "Gothic," even when applied to

Mahogany Chair, c. 1760.
(*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

Mahogany Chair, c. 1750–60.
(*J. Dupuis Cobbold, Esq.*)

the national ecclesiastical style of England, is a misnomer, which began as a term of derision, possibly in the eighteenth century itself, in the same way as we use "vandal" and "vandalism" at the present day. That the style owed nothing to, or had any connection with the Goths cannot be denied, but the name of Gothic has persisted, in all probability, in default of another and better one. The words "geometrical" or "pointed" have been suggested, but not all Gothic is geometrical, and some is not pointed. That

Mahogany Armchair, c. 1765. *The Full Style of Chippendale, with Elaborate Back, Well-shaped Arms, Square Legs, and plain Stretcher Underframing.*

some proper designation is required, a term which shall not express either too much or too little, is unquestionable, if only to get away from the Victorian travesties which have masqueraded under the same name.

It is difficult to know where the Chippendale Gothic begins and ends. Thus, in the five chairs on pages 159 to 161 it is pronounced, whereas in the two on page 162, there is only a mere suggestion. The interlacing of the central splats of chairs was almost certain to produce this pointed-arch effect; we find this when two semi-circular Saxon arches are interlaced in the same way. These square-legged chairs of the early Chippendale period exhibit an amazing

Mahogany Chairs, c. 1765.

The Author. *C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*

facility in the designing of the backs, as a glance at the other examples illustrated here will show. It is unnecessary to refer to them in

detail. No two are alike, yet there is a general resemblance between them all. Still more restricted, from the point of view of the designer, and, in proportion, even more successful, are the chairs with square legs and solid upholstered arms and backs. Two are given here, on pages 170 and 171, which in simple beauty of line are almost unapproachable. The covering is a thick black hide; the only finish a close brass nailing in rows and patterns. There is neither carving nor moulding; everything depends, for success, on just proportion and carefully studied lines in the shaping of the upholstery. Both are exceedingly comfortable as well as refined in appearance; triumphs even in an age of fine chair-making.

Mahogany Chairs, c. 1760. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

1 *ft.* 9½ *in. across Seat;* 3 *ft.* 2½ *in. Height of Back. One of Three.*

1 *ft.* 9½ *in. across Seat;* 3 *ft.* 2 *in. Height of Back. One of a Pair.*

There are no patterns of splats in these Chippendale chairs which are peculiar to those with straight square legs, as distinct from the

cabriole. On the contrary, the use of the square or the shaped leg appeared to be entirely a matter of taste. Thus, the interlaced splat of the settee on page 167 and of the upper chair on page 169 are not only very similar to each other, but the same pattern is to be found in the chairs with cabriole legs, as we shall see in the next chapter. The pierced splat, fixed, not only to the cresting and seat rails, but also to the back legs, as in the lower chair on page 168, is, perhaps, a square-leg fashion, but this is too rare an example for any rule to be stated.

The corner chairs of this period deserve special notice, as the square seat, placed cornerwise to the back, belongs essentially to the Chippendale school. We have already seen the prototype of this form in the writing chairs from Lyme Park illustrated in an earlier chapter, but these were not true corner chairs. It is probable that the form originated with commode chairs, for the convenient placing

Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs, c. 1750. (*Bond's Hospital, Coventry.*)

of these pieces in the bedroom; certainly many at the present day have been converted by cutting away the large pendant apron-pieces.

They are to be found with the four legs square, with the front leg only of the cabriole form, occasionally with three cabriole legs, and, very rarely, with four. They were also made, occasionally, to match other chairs of the ordinary type.

A commode chair which has been altered, in the manner just described, loses a considerable part of its value, both historically and financially. The corner chair with square legs is always stretchered, as on page 172, whereas with the commode, these rails would be in the way, and were, therefore, omitted. It is seldom worth while to add them to a converted commode chair of this simple type, as the chair must be taken to pieces before they can be inserted, and this is seldom worth the expense. With the cabriole leg, as in the two examples on the same page, this cross-railing is seldom or never provided. It may be advisable, especially with those chairs where the front leg only is of the cabriole form, to examine this leg very carefully, especially at its junction with the seat-framing, to see if it has been added at a later

Mahogany Settee. Eagles' Heads Carved on Ends of Arms: 6 *ft.* 4 *in. across Seat-Rail;* 1 *ft.* 11½ *in. Depth of Seat; c.* 1750.

date, as these corner chairs, with cabriole legs, are rare and valuable pieces. The same caution is even more necessary in the case of these

Mahogany Chair, c. 1760

comfortable as well as decorative in appearance, it is probable that they were designed in this form to occupy the angle of a room in the same way as a corner cupboard or cabinet. I have heard it stated, as a cardinal principle in the successful arrangement of a room, that if one begins with the corners the middle can take care of itself. There is a great amount of truth in this, as I have verified on many occasions.

The wall furniture of this fretted period of Chippendale is, perhaps, the finest which the chairs with three or four legs of the cabriole form.

The usual upholstery of these corner chairs was a drop-in frame, webbed, filled with horsehair and covered with a fabric or a leather. Occasionally, coverings of fine-stitch needlework are found, but these are seldom original. I have known of two important sets of dining-room chairs where the armchairs were of this corner type. In the one case the covering was a polished black cowhide, which appeared to be original.

While these corner chairs are

Mahogany Chair, c. 1760.

eighteenth century produced, the walnut years not excepted. Three pieces are shown here, on pages 173 to 175 which may be accepted as representative of the highest class. The first is, properly, a bookcase, excellent both in craftsmanship and design. The key-pattern fretted frieze of the lower carcase is carried right across the fronts of three shallow drawers. Below are three more, the central long drawer having a cloth-lined writing slide, with paper partitions underneath. The upper doors are solid; those in the lower stage are veneered with thick pit-sawn mahogany veneer of superb figure. The ends of the upper carcase are grooved inside, to allow of the spacing of the shelves to accommodate books of various sizes, and from the closeness of this grooving we know that the piece was made as a bookcase, and not as a china-cabinet.

Mahogany Chair, c. 1750.

Mahogany Chair, c. 1760.

The china-case on page 174 is almost equal in quality to the bookcase, yet has very much the appearance of being a converted hanging-press. The doors open now in two stages,

the lower ones right to the ground; a very unusual feature had they been originally made as two and not as one in height. It is both a refined and a useful piece in its present state, and the conversion, which has, probably, replaced wooden panels with glass, is a distinct gain in changing its sphere from the privacy of a bedroom, or the obscurity of a corridor, to the publicity of the living-room. The double-chest on page 175, the third and concluding one of these examples of the fretted period of Chippendale, shows the degree of

Mahogany Armchair: 2 ft. 2 in. across Seat; 2 ft. 10¼ in. across Arms Outside; 3 ft. 1½ in. Floor to Top of Back; 1 ft. 10½ in. Depth of Seat Oustide; 1 ft. 6½ in. Floor to Top of Seat; c. 1750. (Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)

elaboration and fine workmanship which was lavished on what must, at its period, have been a bedroom piece, essentially. Whether the

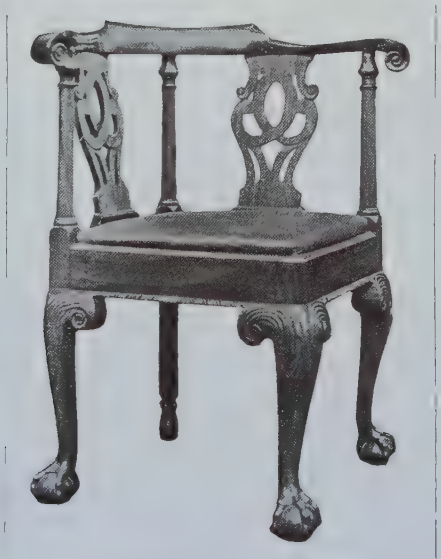
fashion of the quarter-column in a rebated corner was borrowed from the trunks of the mahogany grandfather cases of this period, or *vice versa*, it is not possible to say. Clockcase making had ceased to be a special branch of the cabinet-maker's craft by the middle of the eighteenth century. Not the least noteworthy point in much of the cabinet furniture of this date was the superb quality of the brasswork, handles, and escutcheons, both from the point of view of

Mahogany Armchair: 2 ft. 3 in. across Seat; 3 ft. 2½ in. across Arms Outside; 3 ft. 3 in. Height of Back from Floor; 1 ft. 10 in. Outside Depth of Seat; 1 ft. 6 in. Floor to Top of Seat; c. 1750. (Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)

the chaser and the gilder. We have already seen many notable examples of these fine handles and lock-plates on some of the

Mahogany Corner Chair, c. 1750.

Types of corner chairs of the mid-eighteenth century. These chairs were designed for library, dining-room, or bedroom use. They are, as a rule, both decorative and comfortable. The pierced and carved splats follow the usual fashion of the mahogany chairs of the same period.



Mahogany Corner Chair, with Three Cabriole Legs; c. 1760

Mahogany Corner Chair, with Four Cabriole Legs; c. 1760. (R. Arnold, Esq.)

Mahogany Bookcase, c. 1760. (*Viscount Rothermere.*)

Mahogany China-Case: 7 ft. 2¾ in. High; 4 ft. 10½ in. Wide; 2 ft. ½ in. Deep; c. 1750. (Capt. N. R. Colville, M.C.)

Mahogany Double Chest of Drawers: 7 ft. High; 3 ft. 8½ in. Wide; c. 1750.
(*C. D. Rotch, Esq.*)

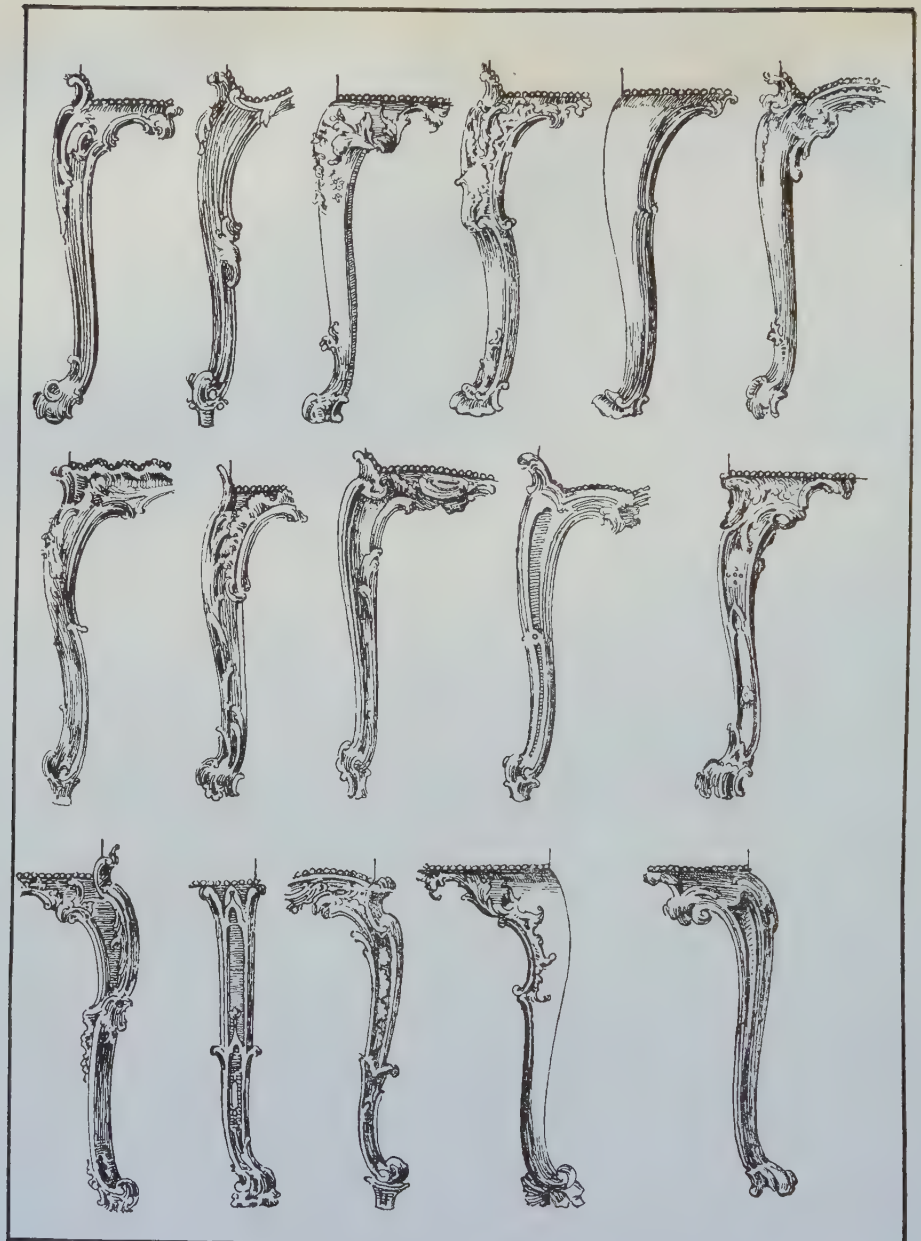
examples illustrated in the earlier pages of this book. The eighteenth century was not the age of wholesale duplication or "mass-production" methods, and a fine piece of furniture was thought worthy of special moulds and castings and all the skill which the chaser and the gilder of metal could lavish upon the ornate brasswork of this date. At the later period of Hepplewhite, when handles of smaller size, and more simple type, were used, the substitution of silver for brass was not an uncommon practice. This, however, is to anticipate a later chapter.

Fine as this mahogany furniture of the mid-eighteenth century is, it demands a proper setting to be appreciated and to appear to its best advantage. In this connection, the advice given in Chapter III. of the first volume may be studied with advantage. I *have* seen good mahogany pieces of this period in suburban villas (those houses in which the "contract builder" delights), but they have always appeared woefully out of place. On the other hand, rooms which are beyond the comfortable height (eleven feet or less), yet miss the dignity of the great apartments to be found in the early eighteenth-century houses, are equally as unsuitable. It is the fault of the average Victorian house (one of them, at least, for they are legion) that everything is compromised. The rooms are too high or too low, too large or not large enough, and the fenestration is always designed as if the thing to be worshipped was either the work of the sash-joiner or the actual timber and glass itself, anything excepting the free light and air of heaven, which windows should be constructed to admit.

CHAPTER VII

CHIPPENDALE CABRIOLE FURNITURE

UNTIL recent years, comparatively, it has been the usual custom to style all mahogany cabriole furniture as "Chippendale," the term being used, in nearly every instance, to indicate not a school, but the man himself, if not as maker, certainly as designer. We know now (and a little patient research would have shown us, long since) that Chippendale did very little to develop the cabriole form in his designs, and probably still less in his actual work. He found the paw, the claw-and-ball, or the plain club-foot in fashion when he commenced his London career, and, while he certainly made an energetic attempt, in the "Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director," to introduce something new in this detail, it is surprising how these three forms, especially the claw-and-ball, persist, on tables and chairs, for years after the "Director" was first issued. On the following page is shown a number of Chippendale's suggestions for the improvement of the cabriole leg, yet, with the single exception of the French scrolled foot (which we shall see again in the next chapter), it is exceedingly rare to find anything which even approximates to Chippendale's ideas in this regard. No doubt he regarded the paw or the claw-and-ball as old-fashioned and more or less obsolete. This is not surprising, as the latter had been the usual finish to the cabriole leg for upwards of half a century, and the former for almost as long. Chippendale was a new-comer to London; he had his name to make, and he, with the usual wisdom of the tradesman, angled for patronage with some novel. One would like to believe that the "Director" designs were the creation of Thomas Chippendale's brain, that he



Chair-Legs from the "Director" which show the Type of Feet which Chippendale Illustrated in lieu of the Paw, or Claw-and-Ball.

made preliminary careful sketches for the engraver in the way in which Robert Adam, or his staff, did, as we know from the volumes of Adam drawings in the Soane Museum. To do so, however, involves some considerable difficulty. Who was responsible for the designs in Ince and Mayhew's "System," or Copeland or Lock's design books, which resemble Chippendale's so strongly in general style? Were these other men mere plagiarists? Dates forbid any such theory. We must remember that the engraving of a number of plates, such as in the "Director," for example, was a long and arduous business, to say nothing of the initial designing or sketching. At a modest estimate the first "Director" (1754) must have been projected, if not actually commenced, in 1751. It would not be *after* 1754, however, that the book itself would be available for copying,

Mahogany Card Table (pre-Chippendale), c. 1745. (*Richard Arnold, Esq.*)

and it would be a year or two before any new book, "lifted" from Chippendale's, could be published. Now let us examine the other

books which, apparently, copy Chippendale's style so closely. Lock and Copeland's "New Book of Ornaments" is dated 1752; Edwards and Darly's "Chinese Designs" appears in the same year as the first edition of the "Director"; Johnson's "Designs for Picture Frames, etc.," is published in 1758, his "One Hundred and Fifty New Designs" in 1761, and Ince and Mayhew's "Universal System of Household Furniture" in 1762. The third edition of Chippendale's "Director" appears in this year (a second had been issued in 1759), in which many of the earlier plates are re-used, without even any alteration of the original dates engraved at the foot of each. I suppose

Mahogany Card Table, showing the Opening of the "Concertina" Side: Top 2 ft. 8 in. Square; 2 ft. 5 in. High; c. 1760.

then, as now, the preface or foreword was the last thing to be printed, and we are to suppose that Chippendale knew (as he must have known)

how extensively his style and many of his designs had been pirated, and yet forebore to make any reference to the fact in his latest preface, where he had the opportunity (denied to many authors) of hitting back. It is incredible. A saint—to say nothing of an eighteenth-century cabinet-maker—would not have let such a golden chance slip by. It is a pity that we have no actual record of Thomas Chippendale either as draughtsman or designer; no Soane Museum, private collector, or even owners of actual Chippendale pieces (that is, made by him, but not in his own style) preserve any scrap by way of sketch or drawing, and though we know he worked extensively for

Mahogany Card Table, c 1760.

the Adam brothers (in which case, had he been a skilled draughtsman, it is conceivable that he would have furnished many sketches of

proposed or executed pieces which would, doubtless, have been welcomed by the busy "Adelphi") we find nowhere among the fifty-three folio volumes, containing over six thousand of the original Adam designs, any suggestions which look as if they might have come from his hand. Robert Adam departs from his own style on many occasions; there are drawings, especially of chairs, in which the influence of a designer such as Hepplewhite is very noticeable, but of Chippendale, in his characteristic manner, not a trace. Adam's period of full activity is somewhat later than that of Chippendale; the latter may have grown, in his business, to such an extent, that beyond mere supervision, he could have taken little active part in

Mahogany Card Table, c. 1770. (*C. D. Rotch, Esq.*)

actual details. There is also the strong suspicion that in his later career he had abandoned the Chippendale style, preferring to make

what his patrons (Robert Adam among the number) demanded, and to sink his own identity. That he founded a definite school is undeniable, unless we are to suppose that many of the minor craftsmen, together with Chippendale himself, drew their inspiration from a common, and alien, fount, which is also not beyond the realms of possibility. Even Thomas Sheraton, that misanthropic craftsman, however, allowed some merit to Chippendale, a grudging admission from one who was anything but gracious to other designers, but when Sheraton came to London, from Stockton-on-Tees, the Chippendale style must have been moribund, and its author dead for more than a decade, so Sheraton may have remembered the Roman motto, *De mortuis, nil nisi bonum.*

Mahogany Card Table, c. 1770. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

Although Chippendale used the square leg with great success, attaining both a simplicity and a dignity which is difficult to parallel

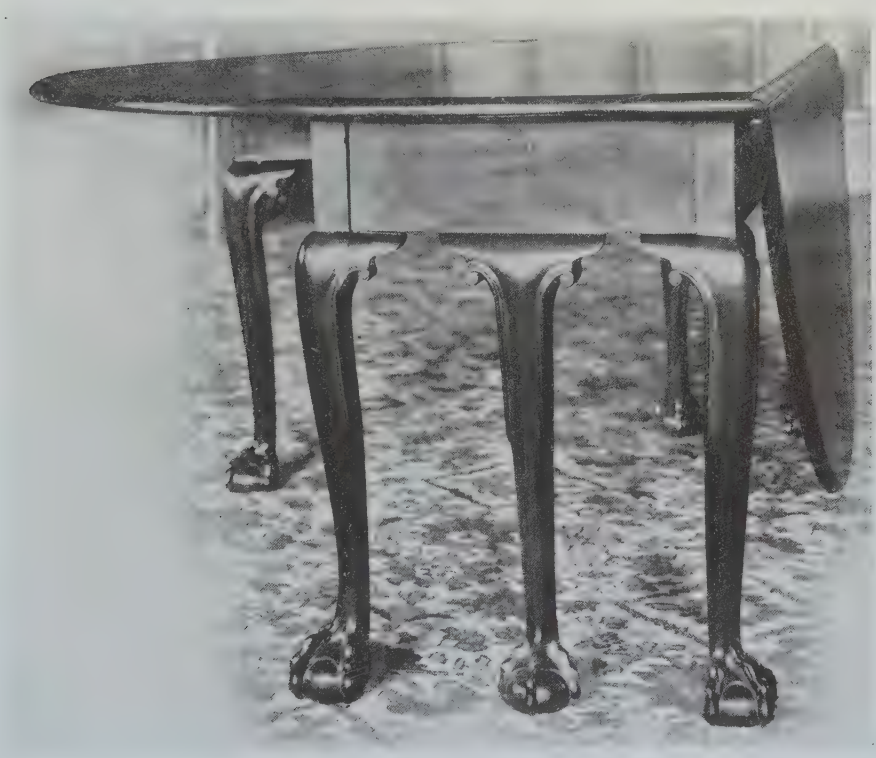
in English furniture, he used the tapered leg very sparingly, reserving this, in the main, for his side-tables and similar pieces, either with a squat square-moulded toe, or a decorated revival of the bun-foot of the late seventeenth century, slightly modified in the form of a rounded cushion. On the dining-room chairs at Nostell (probably designed by Robert Adam) he employs the tapered leg, but, as a rule, it was reserved for the later school of Hepplewhite and Sheraton to demonstrate the decorative possibilities of this form. The cabriole remained in favour for three-quarters of the eighteenth century, and was nearly always adopted, if not for the best (which is a matter of taste), certainly for the most expensive pieces. Considerable license was sometimes taken in the endeavour to make a departure from the

Mahogany Table, c. 1770. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

stereotyped forms, such as carving the feet in representation of dolphin's heads, with the tails spiralling round the leg itself. These

were the extremes of fashion, and were demanded by a class which has existed at all ages, whose endeavour is always to be a little in advance of the mode of the moment.

The cabriole, of necessity, is confined to pieces with legs, chairs and tables of various kinds, including the tripod form, and also to such articles as pole and banner screens and, in exceptional instances, to bedsteads. The illustrations to this chapter have, therefore, been culled from this class of furniture. Chairs, settees, and stools offer the greatest variety, if only by reason of their greater number. In the designs of chair-backs there is often very little departure from the



Mahogany Dining Table, c. 1750. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

pre-Chippendale models excepting—and this is the important difference—that the older motives are used in a far less pronounced

form. It is characteristic of any new fashion that the cardinal features are nearly always over-emphasized. Thus, in the earliest forms of the ball-and-claw foot—which is stated to be derived from the Chinese form of a dragon's claws grasping a pearl—the tendons are always well marked on the shaft of the leg, whereas at a later date, when the form becomes conventionalised, there is no such insistence on the bird-like form of leg, the ball-and-claw being merely a tame finish to the cylindrical-sectioned shaft. Thus the card table, shown here on page 179, is essentially pre-Chippendale, if only for this reason. It might be argued, with a large degree of plausibility, that such a form could have been copied exactly, and at any period. The simple answer is that it was not, for the sufficient reason that this form of long-tendoned cabriole leg is needlessly costly to make, and a workman or master-man would not be paid more for this, than for one of the later, and more conventional kind. Throughout the whole craft of the woodworker, at all periods, there is the tendency to conserve

Set of Mahogany Dining Tables: Tops 3 ft. 8 in. by 1 ft. 7½ in. when Flaps are down; c. 1760. (Viscount Leverhulme.)

labour unless there exist a commercial reason for expending it, such as in decoration of carving or inlay where the addition enhances the

selling value of the article itself. This card table is one of those apparently simple but expensive pieces, where every line and detail is carefully studied (note the almost imperceptible serpentine sweep of the top and underframe), points only found when a new fashion is in its infancy. The framing is veneered with fine curl mahogany rather more than one-eighth of an inch in thickness.

The card tables of the early Chippendale period (in which may also be included the decade prior to the first "Director," as the style varies only in trifling details) are interesting and desirable pieces, as a rule. Whether these tables had to withstand exceptionally harsh usage—at the hands or feet of the losers, possibly—they are nearly always made exceptionally strong for their size. The method adopted to support the upper hinged top, when opened, was by the pulling out of one or both of the back legs. In the later, possibly also the cheaper tables, it was usual to swing out one leg only, fixed to one-half

Mahogany Dining Table: 7 ft. Long; 5 ft. Deep; 2 ft. 5 in. High. A Rare Example with Flaps at Sides instead of Ends, c. 1760.

of the back framing, on a hinge formed by a triple-flanged "knuckle" in the wood itself. These wooden hinges worked, of course, on a metal

Mahogany Armchair: 3 ft. 2 in. Total Height; 2 ft. 1½ in. across Seat; 1 ft. 7 in. across Back; 1 ft. 10½ in. across Top Rail of Back; Seat to Top of Back, 1 ft. 9½ in.; c. 1750.

central pin. A second method, which is somewhat rare, was to pull out both legs and framing on two slides, set at right angles, and pushed

Mahogany Armchair : Seat 2 ft. 2 in. Across by 1 ft. 9 in. Deep ; 1 ft. 5 in. from Floor ; Total Height, 3 ft. 4 in.; c. 1745.

home under the lower top. The best form of all, both from the view-points of stability and ingenuity, was the " concertina-side," which is

shown, partly opened, in the table on page 180. When the movable legs are pulled right out the hinged sides straighten and line with the other halves of the side framings. To hold the table rigid, and to obviate "side-racking," the hinged sides are fitted with grooves inside, in which a flat board or frame is inserted. When the table is opened, this board or frame is pulled backward into the grooves of the hinged side pieces, thereby preventing them from closing together. To close the table this frame is first pushed back under the fixed top. A somewhat different method, and one by no means as effectual, was to provide cabin-hooks and eyes on the hinged pieces, but they never succeeded in keeping the opened table quite rigid.

Mahogany Chair, c. 1750. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

The table on page 181 has the peculiarity, which is frequently found at this period, of the front legs finishing with the claw-and-ball, while the simple club-foot is adopted for those at the back. There appears to be no adequate motive for this almost insignificant economy. Granted that the table, when not in use, would be placed against a wall, when it is functioning as a card table it becomes, in fact, a central piece, and this asymmetry is then very noticeable. On the next example (page 183) the four legs are alike, with exceptionally large ear-pieces occupying the entire width of each tablet of the underframing. The feet are a highly conventionalised and

decadent form derived equally from the claw-and-ball and the paw. This table has a swing-out leg to support the opened top. The next, on page 183, has the whorled or spiral foot of the so-called "French" manner of Chippendale, which was, probably, the last phase of his style. The lack of the earlier virility is very noticeable in this table. The last of this series, on page 184, is of about the same period, but the execution of the carving is much finer and more precise. This piece has the appearance of a converted card table, but there are no signs of such alteration. With these hinged-top tables there was always the danger of the supporting leg giving way, or even of the top being thrown back without the leg being pulled out at all. I have seen such an accident, and on more than one occasion, although, of course, in our well-regulated Old-World House such carelessness would not be tolerated for a moment.

Mahogany Chair: 1 ft. 9¼ in. across Front of Seat; 1 ft. 9¾ in. Seat to Top of Back; 1 ft. 5⅝ in. from Floor to Top of Seat; c. 1750. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)

Dining tables of the Chippendale period are always of the hinged-flap and pull-out-leg variety, a direct evolution from the gate-leg table of Stuart times, such as we have seen in the previous volume. The difficulty of obtaining tables of any size, in this form, was pointed out then, and such pieces as on page 185 appear to be incapable of extension or addition, although we know that large dinner parties were the rule rather than the exception at this date. To employ several tables such as this, in the detached fashion of a modern restaurant, would have involved

an element of apparent unsociability which would hardly have been tolerated. The problem, therefore, is, what has become of these large tables which must have existed at one time? The one shown on page 186 offers the solution. The complete set here is three separate tables, two with round or D-sided outside flaps, the central portion (which is not shown here) having both flaps square. When placed together, and temporarily fixed by the brass clips and eyes (the latter can be seen in the illustration), the combined table has a total length of 14 feet 10 inches, and, when originally made, there may have been one or more additional central sections, as this form can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. These tables had the drawback that the legs were in the way of the diners, and when the Sheraton type (where the tops are supported on a series of central pillars with three or four outspreading feet to each) came into fashion, their superiority in this respect was quickly recognised. The older tables were then altered, in nearly every instance, separated into sections, and the square flaps cut to a segmental shape. In rare instances an attempt was made to solve the problem of the large table in a different way, by hinging the two flaps in the length of the table instead of its depth. By this means a table can be constructed of a size impossible with the older type. The one shown

Mahogany Chair, c. 1745. (Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)

here has a top 7 feet in length by 5 feet in depth. This method of hinging the tops is very exceptional, and tables of this kind are valuable.

The variety obtained in the chair and settee designs of this cabriole period is truly amazing, considering the comparatively narrow limits within which the chair-maker of the Chippendale school voluntarily confined himself. Beginning with the form of top rail known as the "Cupid's

Mahogany Chair: Compare with Armchair above; c. 1750. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

Mahogany Armchair: 2 ft. across Front of Seat; 3 ft. 2½ in. Total Height; c. 1750. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

Bow," the back legs prolonged to an outward sweep where they joined the cresting, the square framing rebated to contain a drop-in seat, and the front legs in cabriole form, it would be imagined that fertility in evolving new patterns would be stultified, in a great measure, by a rigid adherence to these details, yet any great departure is the exception instead of the rule. That these pieces were made in sets, consisting of one or two chair-back settees, two

or more armchairs, and from six to twenty-four of the small chairs as a general rule is more than probable, although it is rare to find a set complete. It is the settee which is usually absent, or found divorced from its chairs. An examination of the ten examples illustrated here, from page 188 onwards, will show the extraordinary similarity, coupled with variety, which these cabriole chairs exhibit. Thus, in the arm and single chairs on page 193, the backs are identical in pattern (although not in execution), whereas the legs differ considerably. The two on pages 190 and 192 are not similar in any respect, yet there is, to the designer, an indefinable idea that the two were designed together. The settee below has the Gothic type of interlaced splat more usually found associated with square-leg chairs. This piece is exceptional in being formed of three chair-backs instead of the usual two, and in the fact that rosewood has been used instead of mahogany.

On page 188 is a fine example of a mahogany armchair of the early Chippendale period, which copies the earlier Georgian models of 1735–40 in such details as the interlaced back-splat, where the

Rosewood Settee, c. 1760. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

familiar device of the figure 8 is used. The flattened top rail of the back has a gadroon-carved centre from which a drapery swag hangs,

with a cord and tassel from which the central motive of the pierced splat depends. The arms have the early continued sweep, with no break in the line of the arm at its junction with the baluster. This is a fine dignified chair, well designed, and of a pattern which must have been very popular, at its time, as repetitions of the same model are not exceptional.

A much rarer form, not as good in design or proportion, but more characteristic of the new manner of its time, is the chair on page 189. The earlier fashion of the terminal scrolling, which is such a marked feature of the early Georgian years, persists here in top rail and arm, and the stretchering of the back legs is a survival of the walnut years. This is the type that we know, to-day, as Chippendale, which must have been available and recognised as a familiar trade pattern when

Mahogany Settee from a Set consisting of Settee and Six Chairs (see Page 196 for a Chair from the Set), c. 1760. (Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)

the great cabinet-maker migrated from Otley to London in *circa* 1749. One could almost institute a parallel between the designs of

the chair-splats of the short period between 1740 and 1750 and the Gothic of the late fourteenth century (the Decorated) as compared with the fifteenth-century Perpendicular. Thus, in the splat of the chair on page 190, the design is mainly geometrical, but partly in free form. In that on page 191, and in the settee on page 194, the piercing, or tracery, is distinctly rectilinear. How frequent is the device of the figure 8 and the diamond, interlaced, will be remarked on a comparison between many of the chair-models illustrated in this chapter. The later form of this interlacing, as on the settee and chair from the set at Dudley House, is shown on this and the previous page.

The chairs which depart, widely, from the more conventional models are interesting, apart from the rarity consequent on such departure. Thus, the one on page 197 has a most unusual form of cabriole carved with an interlacing Gothic pattern in low relief ringed with a pearled collar and finishing in a paw-foot carved with considerable vigour. I have illustrated, in another book,* a table with legs almost of identical pattern to this chair.

On page 198 is shown an extraordinary chair from Lyme Park, in the form of an elaborated "ladder-back." It was made for the house, in which it has remained ever since. The cresting-rail, which is of most unusual form, centres in a bold cabochon carved with the arms of Legh, crested with the Disley ram of Lyme. There is no reason to doubt that it is of local design and make, although in every respect it is fully equal to the finest chairs produced in London at its period.

Mahogany Chair (*see the Settee on Page* 195).

* "English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century," vol. i.

The vigour exhibited in the designing of this chair is extraordinary. Resolved into its component parts, there is, perhaps, little which is exactly original, but the fine curl to the "ladder-rungs" and the lavish use of the C-scroll, in a coherent design, is masterly. There is little or no reason for attributing this chair to Chippendale, although the front legs possess many points of similarity to those illustrated in the "Director," as a comparison with those shown on page 178 will demonstrate. I am unacquainted with any records at Lyme Park which throw any light on this chair, although there is a special character, in the entire design and the richness of the carving, apart from the personal details which associate it with the house and the family of Legh, which would indicate that it was made to mark an important occasion in the history of the house. Lyme is full of treasures, however, and among the other fine pieces, this beautiful chair may have passed, more or less, unnoticed.

Mahogany Chair (One of a Pair): 1 ft. 10½ in. across Front of Seat; 3 ft. 3½ in. Total Height; 1 ft. 9¼ in. Depth of Seat Outside; 1 ft. 6 in. Height of Seat from Floor; 1 ft. 9 in. across Back at Top; c. 1750. (The Author.)

To a craftsman other than one of the Chippendale school must be referred the two chairs on page 199 and the lower illustration on page 200. The "Director" shows several patterns described as "Ribband-Backs," yet none as original, in conception, as the first of the two here.

Mahogany Armchair in the Drawing Room at Lyme Park, Disley, Cheshire ; c. 1760–70.
(Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)

Mahogany Chair (One of Four) : in the Style of Ince or Manwaring ; c. 1770.
(Capt. Luttrell Byrom.)

A set of four (probably all that remained of six, or possibly twelve) were sold at Sotheby's rooms on December 2, 1921, the property of Captain Luttrell Byrom of Kilnwick Hall, Cranswick, Yorkshire. They were in a somewhat dilapidated condition. The backs being built up in layers, of which the outer one was cross-banded, several pieces had fallen off. In design and execution they are almost beyond comparison, even among the fine

Mahogany Chair in the "French" Manner of Chippendale, c. 1770.

Mahogany Chair: 1 ft. 8 in. across Seat; 1 ft. 5 in. Depth of Seat; 3 ft. 1 in. Total Height; 1 ft. 6 in. across Back Extreme; c. 1770.

chairs of this period. The second example on this page, which was one of a set of six, is hardly less noteworthy. The back here consists of a circular open wheel with six pierced "spokes" springing from a ringed centre, each curved to the right, giving a peculiar appearance of motion to the whole design. If one could hazard the name of a designer of these two remarkable chairs, then it is either to Ince or Manwaring that attention should be directed rather than to Chippendale.

These two chairs, especially the first, serve to illustrate the point

of the conventional, or mannered character of much of the output of the large workshop. It might be thought, on immature consideration, that with a wide connection among the wealthy and the notable, a business house would have the greatest opportunity, if not the actual incentive, for producing pieces of original character. This, however, is not the fact, in the majority of instances. With an assured trade, there is no longer the incentive, with the result that the same patterns are repeated, again and again, with little or no modification. Within the memory of the older school of cabinet-makers, the furniture of such firms as Gillow, Jackson and Graham, Wright and Mansfield, or Morant, was nearly always recognisable, although their designs were almost invariably in the same style. With Chippendale's published designs, although they appear to offer a wide variety, there are always definite circumscribing lines, beyond which he never ventured unless engaged on pieces to the designs of others, such as Robert Adam, for example.

Mahogany Armchair (see Settee on Next Page), c. 1770. *(Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.)*

Of the work of Robert Manwaring we know very little, nor does the vile draughtsmanship of the "Cabinet and Chair-makers' Best Friend" (1765) assist one in forming any idea of his capabilities as a designer. There were numbers of small makers at this period, fine craftsmen, who, from their inconsiderable status and the natural ambition

with which they may be credited, as a natural assumption, would vie with each other in producing pieces not only good in execution, but also novel in design. It is to one of these small shops that the chair on page 199 should be ascribed, both on account of its individuality and rare form. Such a model, in the hands of Thomas Chippendale, would have been repeated on many occasions, and would not be the exceptional pattern that it is at the present day.

The chairs and settees with solid upholstered backs, of the later or "French" period of Chippendale and his school, were notable for their clean-cut design and remarkably high quality of workmanship. Eleven examples are given here on pages 200 to 208. The armchair and settee on this and the previous page are part of a set in the drawing-room at Lyme Park, with the fine oak panelling from the old Long Gallery of the former house as a most effective background. Un-

Mahogany Settee (see Armchair on Previous Page), c. 1770. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

fortunately, the set has been re-upholstered at various periods, and in different coverings. The small and very charming settee on page 203 is at Dudley House, Park Lane, and must have been

one of a pair made to occupy window recesses, as I have since seen its fellow. The two chairs on page 204 are covered in fine-stitch needlework which, while not original, is the proper covering to chairs of this kind. The settee, arm and single chairs, shown on pages 205 and 206, are from a large set of fifteen pieces, in the second drawing-room at Dudley House. They were purchased from Barlow Hall, near Manchester, the seat of Sir William Cunliffe Brooks. The set has its original coverings, panels of petit-point needlework, framed in gros-point, in the French taste of their time. The large sofa on page 207 is in the same manner. The small chair, on page 208,

Mahogany Settee, c. 1770. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

which closes this series, is the more characteristic English version of the same style, well designed and finely executed.

The cabriole is used in many ways at this period other than for

the legs of chairs and tables. The same form is found on stands of chests and similar pièces, but it loses much of its character when dwarfed. A true cabriole leg, to be effective, should have the appearance of carrying a superimposed weight such as the framing of a table or the seat of a chair. On page 210 it is shown as a finish to a bedpost, but while finely carved, with the bold character which distinguishes the best work of this period, the general appearance of the heavy leg with the delicate fluted post above is somewhat unfortunate. When made, as many of the cabriole bedposts were, with the knees separately attached on sockets and pegs, so that they could be removed in order to obtain access to the bed-bolts, the employment of the cabriole form became a self-attested failure. In its proper sphere, that is, on chairs or tables, or similar pieces such as small bureaux, the

Mahogany Chair, Covered in Petit-Point Needlework, c. 1770.

Mahogany Armchair, Covered in Petit-Point Needlework, c. 1770.

cabriole leg is ideal, and at its best, is typical of the finest period of the eighteenth century. In the hands of a craftsman of skill and taste its possibilities were great indeed, yet it must not be imagined, from the selected pieces which have been illustrated in these pages, that the cabriole was uniformly successful. For one success there were many failures. Unfortunately, to illustrate these, while it might be desirable from the point of view of the student of furniture, would be to destroy any value which this book may have, as a guide to the possessor of the Old-World House in the furnishing of his rooms where, of course, the contents must be worthy of the house itself, and the best of each kind, therefore, is not too good.

Mahogany Settee Covered in Needlework: From a Set at Dudley House consisting of Twelve Chairs, Two Armchairs and Settee; c. 1775. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir J. H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

To the beds of the eighteenth century, a chapter, if not an entire book, could be devoted, and the illustrative material would be plentiful enough. Modern ideas, swinging pendulum-fashion to the other

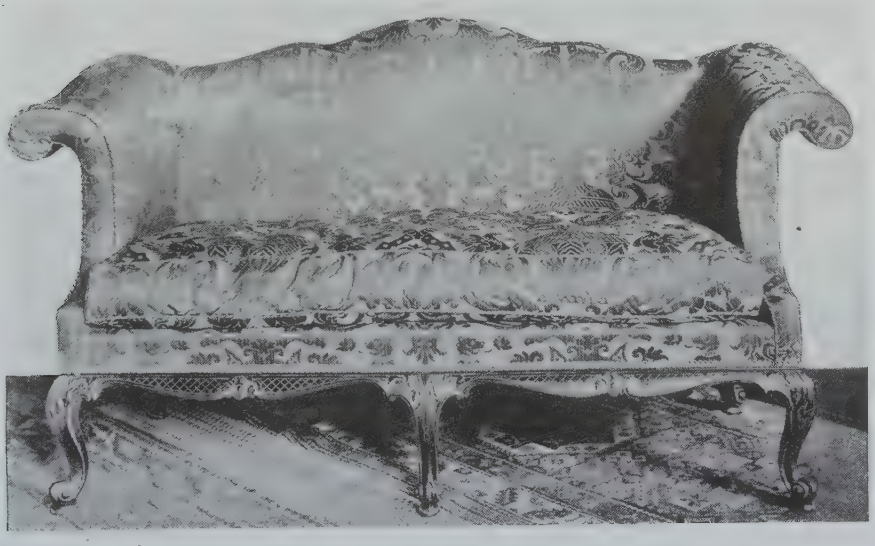
extreme, has condemned these four-post beds as unhygienic, and this is, no doubt, true of those where the draperies are heavy and voluminous, fitted with rings and rods so that the sleeper can be entirely enclosed. In large towns, where smoke and dirt are the rule, the covered-in tester accumulates dust. The decorative appearance of these "four-posters" atones for a good deal, however, and if our Old-World House is situated in the open country or in a village (and, personally, I can visualise it in no other surroundings unless perhaps a cathedral town) the dust-collecting qualities of covered testers are comparatively negligible. The fully drapered bed is quite unnecessary; curtains at the head end and a pleated backcloth only are required. Valances above and below are desirable, as they give just that finish which the usual open or French bedstead always lacks.

Arm and Small Chairs from the Set at Dudley House (*see Page* 205 *for Settee*).

These four-posters vary from the well-designed (up to about 1775) to the clumsy and ugly specimens of the later Sheraton period. A later type, which

includes veritable monstrosities, is that of William IV. or the early Victorian era, where the posts were huge and the cornices immense. Beyond their use as firewood, they have no value to the collector. A later, and still more abominable bedstead was the half-tester Arabian, so prized by our Victorian grandmothers. I have heard of these being bought and used, but to introduce them into our Old-World House is a veritable sacrilege of which none but the absolutely uncultured would be guilty.

Two cautions may be given in conclusion to this chapter. If one has the good fortune to acquire a really good specimen of a "four-poster," such as the one illustrated here, and it is found that the bedroom, in which it is intended to place it, is too low, do not be guilty of cutting the posts down. Regard it as a blunder in purchasing, and pass it on to others who can give it its full state and dignity. We possess what we buy, and pay for, but some things are trusts as well as acquisitions, and fine English furniture is scarce



Mahogany Settee in the French Manner of 1775. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

enough without emulating the vandals of the Victorian period, to whom nothing was sacred that was fine.

The second word of advice is this. Modern comfort and hygiene in bedding has interdicted the flat laths of wood with which these eighteenth-century bedsteads were fitted in the original instance, and some alteration is necessary in this respect. It is as well to begin

Mahogany Chair. A Good Example of High Quality in the Chairs of the "French" Period, c. 1775.

Mahogany Four-Post Bedstead. The Early Chippendale Cabriole Period, c. 1750.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

properly, by abolishing the screw-bolts with which the side and end rails are secured, providing instead iron dovetail connections, such as are sold in ironmongers' shops as articles of commerce. The bolt-holes should be filled up, and the covers, or pateræ, permanently fixed. An upholstered spring mattress—not a box-spring, but one with a stitched and caned edge — can then be made to fit the bedstead. Perhaps a third caution could be added. If our collector be fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to acquire a single bedpost, keep it as a museum specimen, but do not add a tripod and a tray-top and torture it into a vase-stand. There is nothing more horrible than a gaunt great piece of furniture such as this. Leave it to the suburban villa, in which nothing looks out of place. That is the one advantage which this type of villa possesses.

Detail of Bedpost and Foot (*see Previous Page*).

CHAPTER VIII

MAHOGANY TRIPOD FURNITURE

IT is impossible to credit the school of Chippendale with the adoption of the tripod, although they did so much to make it popular. Small pieces such as tables, banner or pole screens, and candle-stands were made in considerable numbers in the years from 1750 to 1790, and both care in designing and a considerable amount of fine workmanship were lavished on these small articles of furniture. Perhaps nowhere does the fine taste of the furniture-maker exhibit itself more strongly, and to greater advantage, than in many of these tripods. Unfortunately, many of these have been debased by later additions, in the way of carving, applied to these plain but characteristic pieces of the mid-eighteenth century, with the sole idea of enhancing their market value in the estimation of the uncultured collector. These plain pieces, such as the wig or powder-bowl stand on the next page, have a distinctive character of their own which no carving embellishment can improve. Once made in this form, the wood necessary for any carving has been cut away in forming the various shapes, and to add any ornamentation of this kind must involve the deforming of every calculated line. Thus a plain club-foot, similar to the one on this piece, could be carved in representation of a paw or a dolphin's head, for example, but the trained eye would detect in a moment the enforced economy, in the way of material, consequent on the working within a prescribed narrow limit. There was no reason why the original maker should not have been generous with his timber; the additional cost could only have been trifling. It is as well, therefore, to be extremely

suspicious of any carved tripod where the design is not well contained in its wood: any suggestion of skimpiness in the timber may indicate the hand of the wood-carver at a later date. To the true collector such "carved-up" tripods are worthless things, as all shams should be.

Mahogany Powdering Stand, c. 1750. (*Capt. The Hon. Richard Legh.*)

The principle of the three-point support, which allows of the tripod standing firmly on the most uneven floor, was fully appreciated in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The advantages were so great, and so obvious, that one cannot imagine any experienced maker devising one of these central pillar-and-claw tables with *four* legs instead of the usual three. It may be argued that absurdities can be made at any period, but when a trade possesses fine traditions, such as we know existed throughout the eighteenth century, it is difficult to imagine such a piece being produced. When a trade is on a high level, the bad or unscholarly workman cannot exist; it is only when he is one of many that he can survive.

I have always viewed these "quadruped" tables with extreme suspicion. The tripod was never a very expensive piece to make, however elaborate it might be, yet fine examples to-day are, relatively, the most costly of all furniture. Any unusual feature in carving or other detail increases the price immediately, yet plain tripod tables, quite original to their period, are reckoned at no more than a second-hand value. The caution here implied should be sufficient. The opportunity makes the sinner.

Mahogany Tripod Table, c. 1760. (*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

It may not be generally appreciated that the older form of grand piano with three legs perpetuates this tripod principle. Such an instrument *must* stand firmly on any floor, whereas the modern type,

with its coupled or "trestle-legs," rarely does, with the result that the increased resonance of the former conveys the impression that it is actually the better piano, while in fact, it is merely being heard to greater advantage.

The small tripod tables of the later eighteenth century appear to have been made for afternoon tea, which at this date had become a regular function. That much gossip, and some scandal, was inter-

Mahogany Tripod Table. "Pie-Crust" Top and Spiral-Fluted Pillar, c. 1760.

changed across the "dish of Bohea" we know from many contemporary writers, and it has been remarked with some truth that the

habit has also persisted to our day, especially in small country villages. Why is it that we are more prone, as a rule, to say nice things of our neighbours across the dinner table, while their shortcomings are so apparent when the teapot is in evidence? Surely the answer to the riddle cannot be—alcohol?

These tripod tables can be resolved into four classes—namely, those with plain tops, often circular but sometimes square or octagonal;

Mahogany Tripod Table, c. 1750. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

those with the top dished and shaped on the edge (commonly known as "pie-crust" tables); a third variety where the top has a gallery of

small spindles, and the fourth, where the gallery is fretted with or without the addition of carving. Examples of the four are given in this chapter.

In the majority of instances these tops are made to tip up, provided underneath with two cross-runners through which metal centres

Mahogany Tripod Table with Spindle-Gallery, in the Manner of 1770.

are bored or screwed to the square boxing which they straddle. A small brass spring-catch is fixed to the under-side of the top which

engages into a square socket when the top is depressed to its horizontal position—hence the name "snap-tables" by which they were styled in the design books of the time. The open boxing, with squat columns at the corners, being thus attached to the top by the pivot hinge and the catch or "snap," a hole was bored in the bottom plate

Mahogany Tripod Table. Tray-Top with Carved and Fretted Gallery, c. 1760.
(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

into which was inserted the pin turned on the shaft or pillar. This pin was slotted so that a wedge could be driven partly through to

hold the top rigid and prevent it being lifted off. If the wedge were short enough to clear the corner columns of the open boxing, the top could be revolved, riding on the shoulder of the central pillar (see page 213). That the same three actions, of tilting, revolving, or removing the top, could have been attained by less complicated

Mahogany Tripod Table. Tray-Top with Fretted Gallery, and Carved Masks on Corner; c. 1760. (*The Author.*)

means is evident to any cabinet-maker, but this appears to have been the only method which was adopted. Occasionally, as on the table

on page 216, the top was fixed to a dowel or wooden screw on the central pillar, and neither revolved nor tilted.

These tripod tables belong necessarily to the cabriole period of the Chippendale school, and, as a rule, the simpler types are the earlier, such elaborate examples as on pages 217 and 218, being the later phase of the style. The earlier tripods are also free from the sprawl which disfigures much of the subsequent work. The one on

Mahogany Tripod Tea Table. Hollow-Sided Octagonal Fretted Gallery, c. 1770. (*The Author.*)

page 214, for example, has the peculiar grip like the poise of a dancer. It is usual, with the true politeness of the Londoner, to refer to the

sprawling tripods as being of country make, but researches into much of the furniture made in small provincial towns in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have shown that the country maker was often not only equal but even superior to the London craftsman. It is not want of knowledge, but sheer decadence, due to making the same thing over and over again, with consequent loss of pride and spontaneity in production, which produces the inartistic thing in the greater number of instances. The best craftsmanship is usually to be found in the smaller shop, or was until modern commercialism destroyed all artistic creation by the demand for the cheap and the "mass-production."

Mahogany Tripod Stand, c. 1770. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

Of the tripods illustrated in these pages, the first shows the most usual form of supporting pillar, a fluted shaft finishing on an acanthus-carved vase. A similar form will be seen above the tripod of the needlework banner screen on page 221. The spirally-fluted shaft, as on page 214, is much rarer. The bowl, which is used here instead of the vase, has a similar detail. This spiral-fluting of the shafts is the later use of the slide-rest in lathe-turning to which reference has already been made. The spiral-fluting of the bowls was the work of the wood-carver entirely. The detail was a favourite one at this period. It will be noticed on the banner screen from the Victoria and Albert Museum (page 222) and the vase-stand from Dudley House (this page).

Two very elaborate and very charming examples of the small fret-gallery tables are illustrated on pages 217 and 218. In both the treatment of the bowl is similar, an imbricated leaf twining round, carved with great precision. Each tripod finishes in dolphin-heads, the legs of the first carved with fish scales up to the inverted cabochon-and-leaf, while on the second the knees are decorated with masks, repeated again on the hollow angles of the top.

The larger table, on page 219, is peculiar in many ways. It was made specifically as a tea-table, and possessed originally a large octagonal silver tray, with "hand-holes" made to drop into the fretted gallery. Outside this railing are eight dished projections for saucers, and beneath are the same number of small circular trays, pivoted to swing out, and dished to hold plates. The cups and saucers of this date were small, as a rule, made in imitation of the Chinese Famille Rose services, but

Mahogany Banner Screen with Needlework Panel, c. 1770.

Mahogany Tripod Screen Needlework Panel, c. 1760. (*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

provided with handles to the cups. The circular dishings on the top of this table and the trays below measure only $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches across, respectively. The hollow-sided octagon between the fretted galleries is $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches in its smallest dimension, the greatest diameter of the top being 3 feet. The runners underneath are pivoted to the box, so that the top can be tilted up and the table placed closely against a wall or in a corner. The usual brass spring-catch holds the top rigid when the table is in use. The wood is a very close Cuban mahogany without figure, and so hard that the point of a penknife will not penetrate it.

The rarest form of all, in these pieces, is the open shaft, as on the fire-screen illustrated on the next page. Here the pillar is carved to represent a bundle of reeds, bound together with a twining leaf. Attached to the shaft, at top and bottom, are three inverted trusses, flying-buttress fashion. The tripod is somewhat squat, but magnificently carved. The frame, which is in the full rococo style of Chippendale, is filled with a

panel of Gobelin tapestry, illustrating one of Lafontaine's fables. The pole itself and its finial are not original. Probably the former was of brass and the latter of ivory. A hollow brass pole would reduce the tendency to side swing, which the panel has, due to the weight of the carved frame. On the other hand, if the pole was of wood, in the first instance, this racking may have caused it to break, and the pieces to be mislaid. Even in its restored state this screen is one of the finest examples of pure Chippendale illustrated in these pages. It ranks, in point of design and quality of workmanship, with the Rainham commodes illustrated in Chapter V.

Those who have been able to trace the evolution of design and form, in the illustrations to the preceding chapters of this volume, must have noticed that this tripod furniture of the mid-eighteenth century is merely a development of the cabriole form, here splayed at an angle instead of being used vertically, as on chairs and tables. A satisfactory tripod, of this cabriole form, is not easy to produce. There is not only the shape of the single leg itself to consider,

Mahogany Banner Screen: Panel of Gobelin Tapestry Illustrating one of Lafontaine's Fables, c. 1760.

but the "pitch" or relation of the three to each other, which is equally as important. With a good tripod there should be no unfortunate view-point; at any angle it should be pleasing to a critical eye. However richly carved the legs may be, such ornamentation should not excuse faulty lines, but rather magnify the offence. Better a perfectly plain but well-designed tripod than one where ornament has been used, obviously, to mask initial defects.

For the Old-World House there is no furniture more suitable than these tripod pieces, powdering-stands with bowls for flowers or pot-pourri, small tables, pole or banner screens, and the like. They occupy little space, are very decorative in appearance, and while resting firmly on any floor, are actually stronger than they appear to be. This apparent fragility is an effective safeguard against those careless persons who regard all tables on four legs, no matter how delicate, as pieces made to be sat upon.

Tripod pole screens which have lost their framed panels or banners are also not to be despised. A curving arm, made with a clip so that it can be adjusted to varying heights, wired for electric light with bulb and shade, will make an ideal reading-lamp, light, practical, and portable. From the clip end of this arm the flexible wire can trail to the nearest skirting socket. Small shaving or toilet mirrors can be fitted to the poles of these tripods in much the same manner, with the use of a little ingenuity. A good tripod should be secured wherever possible; its uses are many and its decorative value great. On the other hand, a bad one, no matter how richly carved, should be rejected; it is more than probable that the carving is a later addition. No one, other than a poor or ignorant workman, would produce a tripod bad in line, and then waste time and money on elaboration of carving. Therefore, ornament superimposed on a bad basis should be viewed with extreme suspicion; linnets *have* been painted to look like canaries before to-day.

CHAPTER IX

THE FURNITURE OF ROBERT AND JAMES ADAM

IN the chronological arrangement of English furniture of the last half of the eighteenth century and its designers, the brothers Adam follow Chippendale and precede Hepplewhite. Although Robert Adam was an influential patron of Chippendale and kept the St. Martin's Lane workshops busy for some years on his work at Gawthorp (now Harewood House*) and at Nostell Priory,† he did not appear to influence the style of Chippendale in any way. This is not remarkable, as the first "Director" was published in the same year that Robert Adam commenced his Italian tour, before the Adelphi practice had commenced, and although Adam returned in 1758, the first part of the "Works in Architecture" did not appear until the third, and last, edition of Chippendale's "Director" had been published some eleven years, although the association of Adam and Chippendale began in 1766, if not before. How much Chippendale's style would have reacted to the influence of Adam had there been a 1770, or later, edition of the "Director" we can only conjecture. All that we know is that he made a considerable amount of furniture to Robert Adam's order, and Adam did not hesitate to allow him to come into direct contact with Edwin Lascelles of Gawthorp or Sir Rowland Winn of Nostell, and a considerable amount of work was done in these houses, and possibly at Kenwood, without the intervention of Robert Adam at all.

It may be as well to bear a few dates in mind, at this stage.

* The Yorkshire seat of the Earl of Harewood, near Leeds.

† The seat of Lord St. Oswald, near Wakefield, Yorks.

Carved Gilt Mirror (One of a Pair): 3 ft. 6 in. Wide; Total Height, 9 ft. 6 in.; a Typical Adam Design; c. 1760.

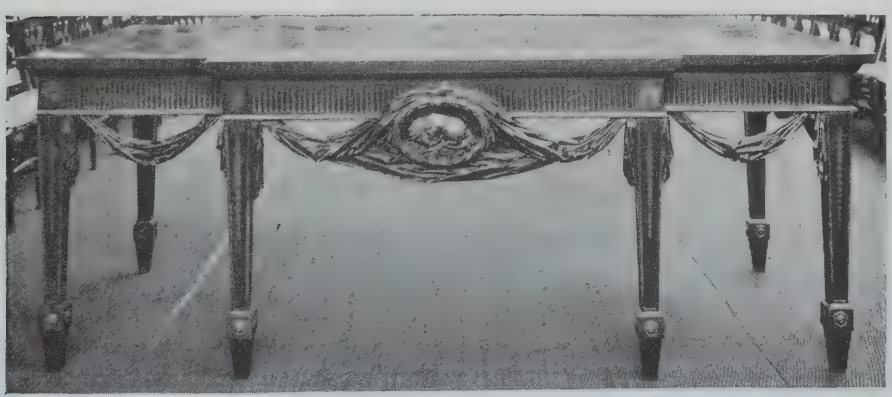
Chippendale was working at Harewood from 1770 to 1776; he died in 1779. The invoices are headed "Edwin Lascelles to Chippendale, Haig and Co., Dr." The statement, therefore, that Haig was in partnership with the son of the famous cabinet-maker only, is here negatived by direct evidence. The Nostell Priory invoices commence with the date of June, 1766, and the firm is then simply "Thomas Chippendale." Thus, we know that for at least thirteen years Chippendale himself was working for the Adelphi clients, and the connection probably extended (that is, with the St. Martin's Lane firm as continued by the son) almost until Robert Adam's death in 1792.

I have already given, in the third volume of "English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century," a fairly copious account of the Adams' life and work. A few details may be repeated here.

Robert Adam was born at Kirkcaldy, the "Lang Toon" of Fifeshire, in 1728. His three brothers, James, John, and William

were associated with him, in a greater or lesser degree, in his London practice, and streets in the Adelphi still bear the names of the four. The father, William Adam, was a distinguished architect of his time and locality, master mason of Edinburgh, author of "Vitruvius Scoticus," but a designer of little originality, with the heavy, stodgy manner of Vanbrugh and Kent. To the father's practice the son, John, succeeded on the death of the former in 1748, and William was probably associated with him at this period.

Robert Adam commenced his Italian tour in 1754, in company with the French architect Charles Louis Clérisseau, and he did not return to England until 1758. During this period of rather more than four years, by diligent study and indefatigable energy in copying and detailing from the antique, he must have laid the foundation to what we know as the Adam style. In 1764 he published the large folio, "The Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia," the result of diligent sketching and measuring by Adam and Clérisseau in 1757. In 1773 appeared the first part of the "Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam Esquires," others



Inlaid Sideboard Table, probably by Seddon, Sons and Shackleton, from a Design by Robert Adam (see the Next Page for One of the Urns and Pedestals which flank this Table); c. 1766. *(Viscount Leverhulme.)*

being published, at intervals, until 1778. A posthumous volume appeared in 1812.

Adam's "Works" differed, in one important respect, from the "Director" of Chippendale; the plates were those of work which had actually been executed, for the greater part. The industry of the brothers must have been immense. One has only to glance through the fifty-three folio volumes of Adam drawings now preserved in the Soane Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, to be convinced of this. These books contain between six and seven thousand sketches and finished drawings, yet are, admittedly, far from being a complete record of the immense Adelphi practice.

Detail of Pedestal and Urn of the Sideboard on Previous Page.

Great stress has been laid on the dominant character of fashion, in architecture, decoration, and furniture, during the eighteenth century. If I were asked to define the distinction between fashion and taste, I should say that the first compels its votaries to something for which they may have no real liking or appreciation, whereas with the latter, personal predilections are untrammelled. To many, at the present day, this dominance of fashion is incom-

prehensible, in the instance of furniture, yet in feminine dress the days when women jeopardised life and limb in London traffic at the dictates of the "hobble" skirt are not so far removed. No architect to-day could enjoy a practice equivalent to that of Robert Adam, because, in architecture and decoration, we are more emancipated. On the other hand, Paul Poiret would have kept a small haberdasher's shop in the eighteenth century, in all probability.

Of the many important works of the brothers Adam, we can name the following: The Adelphi (their own building speculation which would have ruined them had not Lord Bute's ministry succeeded in relaxing the Lottery Laws in their favour), several of the London squares, St. James's, Portman, Fitzroy, and Bedford, streets such as Portland Place, Gower Street, Mansfield Street and Stratford Place, country houses such as Osterley Park Isleworth, for Robert Child the banker (now a seat of the Earl of Jersey), Syon House for the Duke of Northumberland, Shelburne (now Lansdowne) House, Bowood in Wiltshire, Shardeloes in Buckinghamshire, Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, Kenwood at Hampstead, Harewood and Nostell in Yorkshire,

Sideboard Table, Pedestals, and Urns, from Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn's House at 20, *St. James's Square, Painted and Parcel Gilt; c.* 1772. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

Kedleston in Derbyshire, Compton Verney Warwickshire, Croome Court Worcestershire, and Kimbolton Castle Huntingdonshire.

Robert Adam died in 1792 at 13, Albemarle Street, and was buried in the south transept of Westminster Abbey. James survived his brother only by two years, while William lived until 1822.

The invoices for work at Kenwood (or Ken Wood) to the order of the Earl of Mansfield (the same nobleman whose house in Bloomsbury Square was sacked in the Gordon Riots of 1780, when the finest law library in the world was destroyed) are exceedingly interesting. One bill for £309 7s. 9d. is marked as examined by Robert Adam in 1769, and receipted five days later, by William Adam, on behalf of himself, John, Robert, and James. Another, for £340, is signed by Thomas Chippendale Junr. and Wm. France "in full of all demands." This is ten years before the elder Chippendale's death, and there can be no suggestion of a business partnership with France. This William France figures as a master cabinet-maker in several contemporary records. He may have worked at Kenwood in conjunction with Chippendale, his accounts being combined with those of the latter. Both names figuring on the receipt, it is pleasant, in these days of "ghosting," to notice the implication that sub-contracting,

Mahogany Pedestal and Urn, c. 1760. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

where one man does the work and another takes the credit, was not in favour at this date.

In 1770 is another receipt to Robert Adam, in these terms: "Received Jan. 27, 1770, the full contents of this bill by the hand of Mr. France and my son, and in full of all demands, p. Thomas Chippendale."

Chippendale was in partnership with James Rannie in 1766, when the association was dissolved at the death of the latter. Miss Constance Simon, in "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century" (1904) states that Chippendale Junr. entered into partnership with Thomas Haig, who had been book-keeper to his father, on the death of the elder Chippendale in 1779, but we know, from the 1770–76 invoices at Harewood, that Haig was already a partner in those years.

Mahogany Side Table with Marble Top (One of a Pair) made for the Music Room at 20, St. James's Square: 5 ft. 1 in. Wide; 2 ft. 4 in. Deep over Top; 3 ft. High; c. 1772. (Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

Of the association, if any, between the brothers Adam and Hepplewhite of Cripplegate, we have no record, although the Adam influence

Gilt Side Table, with Top Inlaid with Coloured and Modelled Gypsum, Designed by Robert Adam for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 1772. *From the Withdrawing Room,* 20, *St. James's Square. (Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)*

is very noticeable in many of the designs in the "Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" of 1788 (a posthumous work). This, however, is no evidence of Hepplewhite having been employed by Adam, nor do the names of Seddon or Gillow figure anywhere on invoices or other authentic records. Judging by the way in which many of the Adam furniture designs were rationalised in the actual making, the Adelphi must have owed much to the practical knowledge of the cabinet-makers who carried out their work. Robert Adam never really designed in wood; to the last the material was foreign to his ideas, which were identified rather with composition or stucco. Take the mirror on page 226 as an example. Here the extreme delicacy of the ornament is impossible; the result can be seen in the illustration. Yet it should be the first consideration, in the designing of furniture, that the material should be recognised, and admitted, frankly. A steel table, with legs less than an inch in thickness, need not look incongruous, necessarily, but if painted or grained to represent wood, the result must be disastrous. Adam's style demanded shams; composition masqueraded as carving, and to carry out the deception to the full, painting, graining, or gilding were inevitable

Carved Gilt Table with Mahogany Top, c. 1765. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

concomitants. He had a host of imitators, in Hepplewhite, Crunden, Carter, Wallis, and George Richardson, but it is doubtful if any of

these designers (with the exception of Hepplewhite) possessed the necessary technical experience to resolve their artistic creations into actual pieces, even in thought. The Adam door traceries are, as a rule, impossible in wood. Hepplewhite—who followed Adam somewhat blindly in his "Guide"—gravely suggests lead as the proper material, presumably painted to look like wood. Adam used a composition of whiting, resin, and glue with a core of wire

Gilt Side Table with Inlaid Top, c. 1760. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate*)

for his swags, and then covered them with paint or gold to hide the sham.

Carved and Gilt Console Table (One of a Pair). The Top is Veneered with Satinwood; c. 1770. *(Messrs. Gregory and Co.)*

Where Robert Adam excelled was in his decoration, especially in his dignified handling of broad spaces. In spite of his mannered and finicking ornament, which becomes wearisome after a while, as the eye

Painted Pedestal (Two Views) Designed by Robert Adam for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn at 20, St. James's Square, 1772. (Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

has no resting-place, especially when carpets and ceilings alike have the Adam trade-mark stamped upon them, as at Syon and Osterley, there is a fine dignity in such apartments as the Entrance Hall and Dining Room at Kedleston, for example, which William Kent, in his much bolder manner, could never approach. Perhaps no architect made a more frequent use of the apse, or handled it more successfully, than Robert Adam. When he is over-ornate—as he nearly always is—he secures a richness of effect, as in the Drawing Room at Lansdowne House, which atones, in great measure, for the ultra-elaboration.

Gilt Pedestal Designed by the Adam Brothers, c. 1770. (*The Duke of Devonshire.*)

We are concerned here with Adam's furniture, not with his decorative schemes. Those who are interested in the latter can consult Mr. Arthur T. Bolton's monumental work on the Brothers. That much of Adam's furniture underwent considerable modification, in its translation from paper to wood or other material, we know from a comparison of such pieces as the state bed at Osterley with the original drawing.

Examples illustrated in this chapter are also not necessarily the creations of the brothers at all; they merely exhibit their influence. As with the later work of Chippendale, we are

dealing here with the Adam style rather than with the work of the brothers themselves; with the furniture they inspired in suggestion or in actual sketch, which in the hands of makers such as Chippendale, Seddon, France, Hepplewhite, or Gillow became the masterpieces of design and execution which are illustrated in these pages.

Square Piano with Inlaid Case by Henry Holland, Bunhill Row, London, E.C.; c. 1780.
(*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

While we are compelled to dissociate Chippendale from Robert Adam (other than as one who worked for the Adelphi clients), as he is credited with a distinct style of his own, the case is quite otherwise

with Hepplewhite and his school. The latter adopted the Adam style so thoroughly that it is often difficult to know where the manner

Mahogany Library Bookcase Designed by Robert Adam, c. 1770. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

of Adam ends and that of Hepplewhite begins. It is possible to illustrate a series of examples beginning with such pieces as are known

to have been designed by Robert or James Adam and running right into the characteristic manner of Hepplewhite without any noticeable break in continuity.

There is no indication, beyond that of actual records, which will

Mahogany Armchair in the Manner of Robert Adam, c. 1770. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

serve as a guide in dating much of this Adam furniture. Whether it be early or late cannot be gathered, in the majority of examples, from a study of the piece itself. During an extended, and extensive, practice of over thirty years, Adam's style progresses hardly at all. From the early work at Syon until almost the date of his death there are the same familiar details, the anthemion, festoon or swag, vase, griffin, pateræ, and ram's head repeated over and over again. In many of his alternative designs for the same piece there is often difference without distinction. His style was confined within narrow limits, beyond which he seldom ventured. Yet with his rough suggestions, carefully drawn out by the painstaking James, in the hands of practical cabinet-makers such as Chippendale, France, Gillow, Hepplewhite, or Seddon, very notable results were achieved.

Mahogany Chair showing the Adam Influence: 1 ft. 9 in. across Seat; 2 ft. 4 in. Seat to Top of Back; 1 ft. 7 in. Floor to Top of Seat; c. 1760. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)

The fine sideboard from Lord Leverhulme's museum at Port Sunlight, illustrated on pages 227 and 228, is obviously contemporary with much of the furniture at Harewood. Similar as the general inspiration is, the workmanship is that of another hand than that of Chippendale. I am inclined to attribute it to Seddon, Sons and Shackleton, of Aldersgate Street, and to a date prior to the fire which destroyed their premises in 1768. The Annual Register of that year computes the amount of the Seddons' loss at over £20,000—an enormous sum at that date. Their factory must have been on a much larger scale than that of Chippendale, and they produced extremely fine furniture. The firm was

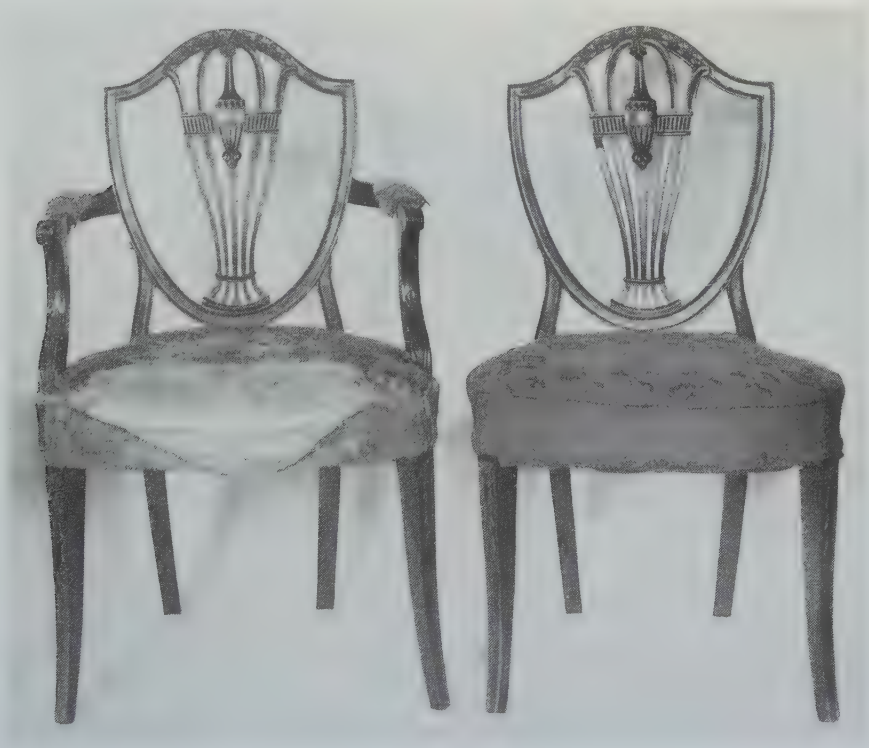
still in existence in 1848, as I have seen a dated piece of that year. The firm was then known simply as "Seddon." To a fashionable architect such as Adam, with the urgent necessity for large output, the Seddons must have been invaluable. For excellence of workmanship I am inclined to bracket them with Chippendale, and for taste in proportions and the selection of veneers and timber, to rank them higher still. But for the accident that they omitted to publish a book of designs, we would have had, probably, a "Seddon" style at the present day.

The following are the measurements of the sideboard illustrated here: The central table is 7 ft. 9¼ in. wide across the top, 3 ft. 8½ in. deep over the central projection, and 3 ft. in height. The top has a forward break of 2¼ in. The pedestals are 3 ft. 4¾ in. high and 21 in. in width and depth. The urns, with their square bases, are 2 ft. 4¾ in. in total height. If we allow only a space of 6 inches between each pedestal and the top of the central table, the entire sideboard occupies a floor space of 15 ft. 6 in.

Carved Mahogany Settee. Compare with the Side Table on Page 231; c. 1770.

The urns are built up in "cooper-jointing," lathe-turned, and veneered with apple-wood inlaid with pear and bleached walnut. The ringed collars and guilloche bands are of chased and gilt brass.

The pedestals have similar brass mouldings, with frieze and chamfered corners inlaid with acacia in striped rosewood. The base is mahogany. The top of the central table is veneered with radiated English yew, with a mahogany and rosewood border. The frieze is inlaid with flutes and pateræ of yellow sycamore in a ground of mahogany. The astragal moulding to the frieze is of chased brass. The pendant draperies and the dormant lion in the central oval panel with laurelled frame are all carved from solid pear-wood. Of the two urns the one on the right is lined with lead, for rose-water, the other fitted for knives, forks, and spoons. Each pedestal has a door, hung

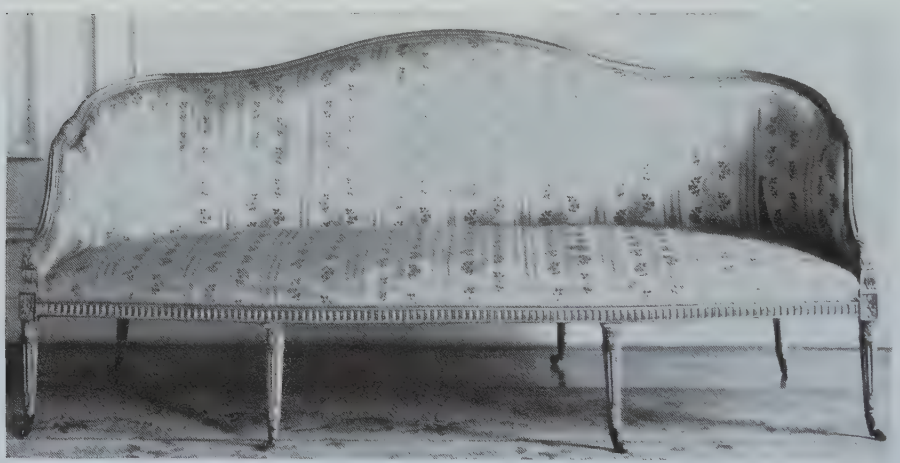


Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs from a Set comprising Twelve Small and Two Arm Chairs. The Style of Adam merging into that of Hepplewhite, c. 1780-90.

on centre-hinges, which opens with its pilasters, and fastens with a link-plate lock on the pedestal side.

Another of these compound sideboards is shown on page 229. The ornament is partly gilt, relieved against a background of dark green paint. The top of the central table is veneered with mahogany, banded on the edges with the same wood, relieved with small carved and applied pateræ. This sideboard was designed by Robert Adam in 1772 for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn for his new house, 20, St. James's Square. It stood, until recently, in the Music Room, now the present Dining Room, the central table standing back in a recess of its own. In the former Dining Room (the " Eating Room " marked on Adam's sketches) stood the two pedestals or torchères, of which one is shown on page 236, and the pair of beautiful side tables (page 231), the backs of which are shaped to fit the segmental end of the original Music Room. The tops of these are veneered with thin sheets of Brescia marble on a slate core.

For the Withdrawing Room the pair of tables were made, of which one, with its elaborate top, is shown on page 232. The tops are modelled



Painted and Gilt Settee. The Style of Adam merging into that of Hepplewhite, c. 1790. (*Sir Lenthal Cheatle.*)

in coloured gypsum, with classical scenes and figures, guarded at the corners with mounts of chased brass.

Perhaps one of the most charming examples of the work of the

Painted and Gilt Armchair. Part of a Set of which the Settee is shown on the Previous Page.

sanded and gilt. These tables were intended to be fixed to a dado of wood, with the bases resting on a fillet of the skirting.

The square piano by Henry Holland on page 238 also belongs to the later Adam period, and shows the influence of Hepplewhite very strongly. The top is inlaid with floral garlands and sprays and musical instruments in various woods, in a ground of sycamore and satinwood with feathered bandings of tulip.

Adam school is the *bombé* pedestal and urn, shown here on page 230. While this was probably one of a pair, it is doubtful if it was intended to flank a sideboard table. There is the same modelled character in the carving of the frieze as on the table on page 231. The pretty console table, one of a pair, on page 235, also belongs to this Adam period, although, perhaps, not made after an Adelphi design. The top is veneered with fine West India satinwood, the frieze below being

Mahogany Armchair. The Adam-Hepplewhite Manner, c. 1780–90.

The large library bookcase on page 239 is a fine example of Adam's more restrained manner. This piece is made in fine Spanish mahogany with lattice-work, in the upper doors, of very delicate section. Much of the strength of this sash-barring depends upon the panes of glass and the putty which secures them in the rebates behind.

Of the chairs of the Adam period there is little to be said, as it is seldom that any are characteristic of his individual style. The fine armchair on page 240 is, perhaps, the most typical, the rams' heads on the front legs being similar in design to those on his furniture at Osterley. The others have been selected to show how the style of Adam bridges into that of Hepplewhite. The settee on page 242 is similar, in many details, to the side table from St. James's Square (page 231). The curious chair on page 241 has much of the Adam character, but the design of the back is not his. Robert Manwaring may be the originator of this pattern, which possesses greater interest than logic in design.

No architect ever dominated the fashionable world of his time, or the trade of the maker of furniture to the same extent, as Robert Adam did. In the following chapter, dealing with the work of the Hepplewhite school, we shall see how far his influence extended. Adam was fortunate in his period and his style. Apart from his genius, which is undeniable, had he commenced his London career half a century before or later than he did, the world to-day might have known little or nothing of the Adelphi and their work.

CHAPTER X

FURNITURE OF THE HEPPLEWHITE SCHOOL

THE school of Hepplewhite follows that of Adam in logical sequence; in fact, it must have been coeval with the later years of the Adelphi practice. We are compelled to adopt the name of Hepplewhite, instead of Seddon, for example, to indicate this school and its style, for the one reason only, that we have, with the former, a published book of designs, the "Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide," whereas the latter indulged in no such venture. How much this school influenced the furniture style of Robert Adam, and how much it was, in turn, affected by the Adelphi designs and work, we can only conjecture. As every cabinet-maker knows, no one unacquainted with practical construction or with the possibilities, and limitations, of the various furniture timbers, can design furniture satisfactorily. Ideas which may exhibit great originality can, of course, be translated into practical form by a skilled and cultured workman, and it is then often a new point to determine to whom the credit belongs, or how it is to be apportioned. Many designers, among our modern school of architects, will realise this, although they may not admit it.

Of George Hepplewhite, cabinet-maker and upholsterer, of St. Giles, Cripplegate, we know little or nothing. No records, in the way of invoices or books of account, have come to light, in which his name is referred to. We are indebted to Miss Constance Simon and her "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century" for the meagre information which we possess, and since the date of that book (1904) there have been no further discoveries. Adminis-

tration of Hepplewhite's effects was granted to his widow, Alice, on June 27, 1786, and from the accounts, the property must have been of considerable value. The "Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" is a posthumous publication, issued in 1788 by "A. Hepplewhite and Co."—evidently the style of the business, as carried on by the widow after the husband's death.

Whether the "Guide," or Hepplewhite himself, founded a definite school, or whether the book merely collected many of the patterns current in the trade at the time (which is the more probable), it is certain that with the Hepplewhite style (even admitting its large indebtedness to the brothers Adam), we arrive at distinct novelty in the furniture produced at this period. Placing on one side the work of Chippendale at Nostell, Kenwood and Harewood (which is merely translated Adam), we can claim the following for the Hepplewhite school:

(1) The use of light decorative woods, such as satinwood, sycamore (known as "hare-wood" or "eyre-wood" when stained with oxide

Mahogany Settee: 6 ft. 3 in. Wide; 2 ft. 2 in. Extreme Depth of Seat. The Oval Back with Anthemion Piercing, and French Leg; c. 1780–90.

of iron), tulip, rosewood, kingwood, chestnut, maple, pear, amboyna, thuja, plane, and ripple-figured ("fiddle-back") mahogany.

(2) The revival of marqueterie.

(3) The decoration of painting, medallions, garlands of flowers, musical instruments, etc., on the natural wood, without painted grounds.

Mahogany Chair. The Oval Anthemion Back with Turned Legs, c. 1680–90.
(*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

(4) The use of beech (principally for chairs) grounded in solid colours and painted as in (3).

(5) Novelty in chair design and construction, using the oval, the shield, the heart, the hoop, and the wheel in the designing of chair-backs.

(6) The effective use of the tapered leg, especially of the form where the taper is on the inside faces only.

(7) The use of French forms, such as the *bombé* front, which involve intricate veneering.

(8) The semicircular shape in sideboards and commodes.

(9) The later form of the sideboard itself, a piece containing drawers and cupboards as distinct from the earlier side *table*.

(10) The use of the tambour or shutter-front.

(11) Small pieces such as slope-fronted knife boxes, tea and sugar caddies, turned sideboard urns (the credit for these may be due to Adam) and enclosed fitted dressing tables.

(12) Square pianos on tapered legs, usually incorrectly known as "spinets."

Satinwood Chair. The Oval Anthemion Back with Square Tapered Legs, c. 1790. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

It is with chairs and settees where the Hepplewhite school displays the greatest creative ability. With the usual chair of the Chippendale period there is very little departure from the rectangular form. However much one may shape a cresting-rail to the back of a chair, the design can be created in paper, either in the form of a sketch or a full-sized drawing, without any allowance for distortion being necessary. When such a form as the shield or the oval be adopted, especially the latter, there is a two-way shaping to be

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2

3

4

Types of Hepplewhite Chairs: (1) *Oval Back with Spokes and Fan.* (2) *Oval Back with Draperies.* (3) *Oval Back with Spokes.* (4) *Oval Back with Decorated Spokes; c.* 1790.

considered, as a chair-back of this form, to be comfortable, must be concave. Here the sketch design is useless as a practical guide; the actual form, that is one which shall be comfortable and look well at

Beech Chair Painted and Gilt. Oval Back with Cresting Knot. An English Version of the Louis XVI. Style, c. 1790. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

the same time, can only be found by experiment. To arrive at an idea of the difficulties here involved, cut out an oval from cardboard,

layers and bending his chair-back with the aid of steam. The maker of any of the chairs illustrated in this chapter has to cut his wood from the solid, framing the back together in four pieces and then applying the outer layer in the form of a cross-banded moulding. All this involves additional time and material as compared with the usual type of Chippendale chair. It is doubtful if any Chippendale chair, even of the most ornate ribbon-back pattern, was nearly as expensive to make as the one on page 249 here; certainly the preliminary models would not be and then bend it into concave form; the amount of distortion will be surprising.

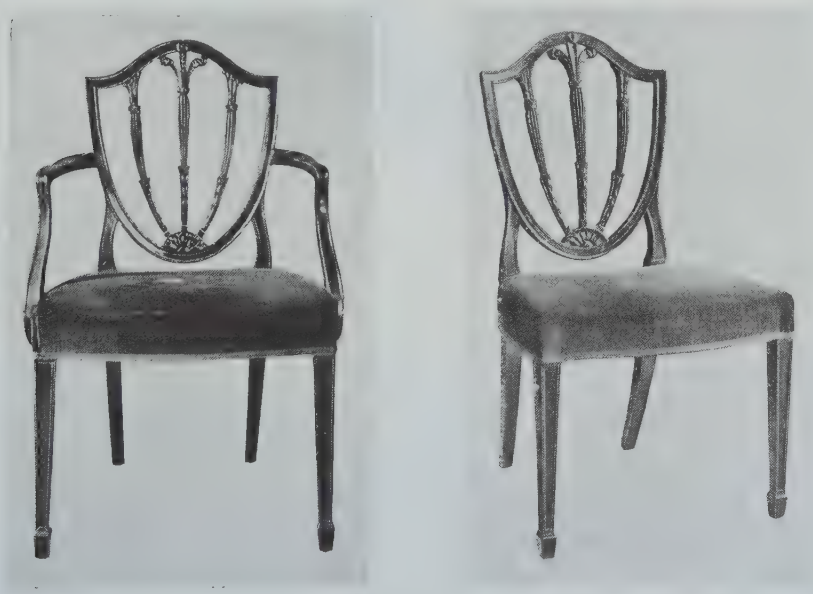
There is another consideration of almost equal importance in the making of an oval-back settee or chair, such as is illustrated here on pages 248 to 253—that is, the waste of timber which this pattern necessitates. The maker of Windsor chairs of the old hoop-back type solves his shaping problems by taking a pliable wood such as ash or yew, laminating it in three or more

Oval-Back Chairs in the French (Louis XVI.) Manner of the Hepplewhite School, c. 1790.

Mahogany Chairs of Hepplewhite Period, Shield-Back Type; c. 1780–90.
(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

as costly, if required at all, with the former, whereas with the latter they would be indispensable.

Whether the considerable license which the school of Hepplewhite took with such timber as walnut, mahogany, or satinwood, was due to a greater or lesser knowledge of the possibilities of chair construction than that possessed by the followers of Chippendale, it is difficult to say. The settee, page 248, for example, which is the work of a highly skilled chair-maker, may have been evolved by one whose audacity as a pioneer was equal to his ability as a workman, but it is much more probable that the original conception came from one such as Robert Adam, to whom technical considerations were only of secondary importance. No chair-maker, however enterprising, would evolve such a pattern to be sold in competition with a corresponding settee



Mahogany Arm and Small Chairs from a Set comprising Twelve Single and Two Arm Chairs. Shield-shaped Back with Prince of Wales's Feather introduced; c. 1780–90. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

in the manner of Chippendale, and early Hepplewhite is coeval with late Chippendale, as we know. With a designer such as Robert Adam,

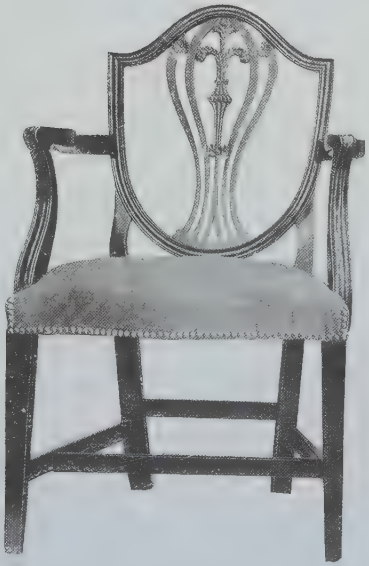
Mahogany Chair showing the Use of the Honeysuckle, Husk, and Pateræ by the Hepplewhite School; c. 1780–90. (*Messrs. Gregory and Co.*)

with his large and fashionable clientele, considerations of price would not be so important as with a cabinet-maker whose business was on commercial or competitive lines.

There is no question that, for sheer dexterity in the handling of complicated curves, the chair-makers of the Hepplewhite school were supreme, not only at this period, but also throughout the entire history of English furniture. There is an easy mastery in the design of the fine chair on page 249, where the Grecian anthemion is used even with greater success than on the settee on page 248, coupled here with the graceful turned leg carved with the water-leaf detail which was so popular at this period. On page 250 is another version, in satinwood, inferior both in proportion and design. On page 251 are four designs of these open-pierced oval-back chairs which show the amazing fertility of the Hepplewhite chair-maker, and his appreciation of the values of light and shade in this piercing or latticing.

These four chairs have been especially selected for illustration here, and on the one page, as while the general inspiration is that of Robert Adam (designs of similar chairs by him exist both on paper and in actual fact), the general details and proportions are those peculiar

Mahogany Chair with Fluted and Carved Central Splat, c. 1780–90.



Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. Shield-Back Type, c. 1780-90.

1

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3

4

Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. Variations in the Form of the Oval and Shield, c. 1780–90.

to the work of the Hepplewhite school. With the exception of No. 4, where the back is flat, in each of the other three the oval is concave, thereby giving a peculiar pear-shape which has been deliberately contrived. If it were possible to flatten one of these oval con-

Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. Interlaced Shield Pattern with Drapery Swags, c. 1780–90. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

cave backs, it would be found that the actual form . which produces the result shown here, when bent to this concave form, is one almost impossible of being shown on a sketch, where the designer has to work on the one plane only.

1

In the second chair on this page, the Prince of Wales's feathers are incorporated into the design of the back, with great success. This device, a favourite one with the Hepplewhite school, will be noticed again in the two chairs on page 255.

Both from

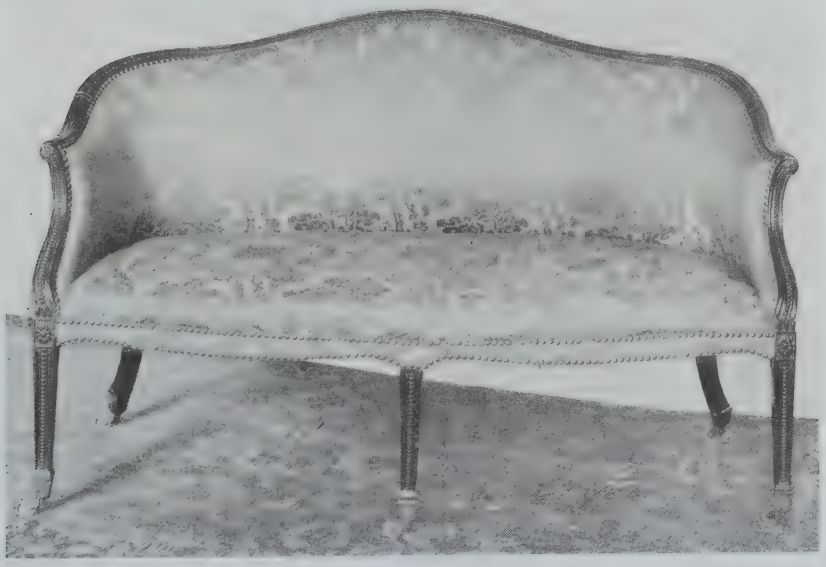
2

3

Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. *The Interlaced Shield or Heart Pattern, c.* 1780–90.

the decorative value of the form itself, and the intrinsic difficulties in its devising, these oval-back chairs are, possibly, the best of all the Hepplewhite models. It is rare to find one of these other than of fine quality. Whether moulded and carved, or left flat for decoration of painting, as No. 3 (page 251), there is the evidence of care and skill, to say nothing of preliminary models, which would never have been devoted to cheap furniture. It is doubtful whether the more elaborate designs, such as No. 2, for example, were ever made in sets. They are truly occasional chairs, made for the "parlour"* or the drawing-room, where sets of six or twelve would have been out of place.

Equally as successful are those chairs where the oval frame of the back is upholstered, as on pages 252 and 253. Although often deliberate



Mahogany Settee: 3 ft. 1 in. Total Height; 4 ft. 10½ in. Wide across Front of Seat; 2 ft. 5 in. over-all Depth of Seat; c. 1780–90. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

copies of the French Louis XVI. models, there is nearly always an English character which is unmistakable if indefinable. Even in

* The term is not used here in the Victorian sense.

the first of the three, which is the most literal transcription, the outward gripping splay of the four legs is seldom found in a French chair of this period. The other two have the characteristic Hepplewhite front legs.

It is worthy of remark, here, that of the two characteristic forms of the Louis Seize chairs, the oval and the rectangular, Hepplewhite should have chosen

Mahogany Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period, c. 1790. *The Serpentine Top Rail. Central Splat to the Back, Chippendale Form of Arm, and Square Legs with Stretcher-Railing. In these Models the Styles of Chippendale and Hepplewhite often overlap.*

the first, and Sheraton (who was equally as indebted to French sources) the second. Both gave a strong English feeling to their copies, and were, perhaps, equally as successful in this. We shall see, in the next chapter, how Thomas Sheraton adopted the rectangular-back chair from France, and what he made of it.

The shield-back probably owed its extensive popularity more to the commercial character of its form rather than to any greater decorative value which it possessed. From the point of view of design, the shield-back is admittedly inferior to the oval,

nor is the same skill required for its production. The back is generally flat, or nearly so, and these chairs can be copied, by a good maker, merely from flat templetes or detailed drawings, without the experimental models which the oval concave back demands. The shield-back chair is also nearly always one of a set, from six to twenty-four small chairs with two or more armchairs, whereas it is rare to find any indication, such as the usual Roman numerals under the seat-framing, cut in with the chisel, that these oval-back chairs were made other than singly or in pairs. Expense alone would have interdicted any larger duplication of the one model, in the greater number of instances.

Mahogany Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. Variations of the Serpentine Top Rail to the Backs, c. 1790.

The shield-back, on the other hand, must have been made in considerable numbers, judging from the numerous examples which

1

Mahogany Chair of Hoop-Back Type, c. 1790.

other the legs are moulded right to the floor, both sets might have been made from the one set of templetes.

The shield-back varies in several ways. In some the top rail is of serpentine form, as on pages 254 and 255; in others, as in the lower two on page 258, the rail is bowed, either with a break, as in the first, or in a complete sweep, as in the second. The filling of the shield panel is either by a central splat or with three or more carved balusters as in the set from Dudley House

have persisted to the present day. That many of these must have been made during the first half of the nineteenth century is probable, since which time they have acquired upwards of a century of reputable antiquity. Differences between patterns are often very minute; thus, in the two sets, page 254, the oval patera in the centre of the splat is inlaid in the one, but carved in the other. Apart from this distinction and the fact that the front legs of the one are tapered, with moulded toes, while in the

2

Mahogany Chair of Hoop-Back Type, c. 1790.

1 2

3 4

Mahogany Chairs of the Hepplewhite Period. The Hoop-Back Type Revived from the Early Walnut Years, c. 1680–90.

Painted and Gilt Armchair: 4 ft. 10½ in. High; 1 ft. 11½ in. Wide; 1 ft. 8 in. Depth of Seat. (J. Dupuis Cobbold, Esq.)

dence still more slender, it has been assumed that both Hepplewhite and Sheraton designed furniture for Carlton House, but neither name figures in the preserved accounts. The use of the Prince of Wales's feathers was simply a testimony to the popularity of the Prince Regent, who, in lending his countenance to prize-fights, mad wagers, and dangerous coaching feats (to say nothing of the Brighton Pavilion and innumerable other vices) (page 255). In these chairs the favourite Hepplewhite device of the Prince of Wales's feathers is introduced. That this motive suggested, in any way, that such chairs were made for the First Gentleman of Europe, during the lifetime of his father, is extremely doubtful. It is as reasonable to suppose that the Royal arms (which were often introduced as a decoration in woodwork) indicated a monarchical association. On evi-

Mahogany Armchair. A Variation from the Oval-Back Form, c. 1780-90.

endeared himself to a sport-loving nation, not over nice in its recreations nor in its general morals.

In tracing the progression of the English chair, from the first years of the eighteenth century, we have seen that the stretcher-railing which braces the four legs together continues beyond the seventeenth century, into the early years of Anne, and then disappears. With the chairs of Chippendale the same fashion is revived, but only in the case of those with square legs. Hepplewhite carries on this detail, although its practical value must have been negligible. Thus, on page 254 the two chairs above are without stretchers, although, otherwise, they so strongly resemble the two below, as pointed out already. Glancing

Beech Chairs Carved and Gilt. The French (Louis XV.) Manner of Hepplewhite, c. 1790. *(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)*

through the other patterns, illustrated in succeeding pages, it will be seen that this detail occurs quite sporadically, without any definite

sense that the design of any particular pattern demands this cross-railing, as a comparison between those on pages 264 and 265 will show. A rather unusual form of the H-stretcher without a back rail can be seen in No. 1 of page 258.

The next Hepplewhite chair model which we have to consider is the heart-shaped interlaced back, of which the one on page 259 is a representative type. In mahogany, this form was usually moulded and carved, but in painted beech or in satinwood (rarely in "harewood") the back was left flat, the necessary relief being obtained by painting of flowers or drapery swags. The usual leg to these chairs was a taper, either with or without a moulded toe.

It is one of the distinctions between the dining-room chair of this Hepplewhite period (which was made in large sets) and the one intended for the sitting-room (where as many as six of the one

Mahogany Settee in the French (Louis XV.) Manner of Hepplewhite: 6 ft. 6 in. Wide; 2 ft. 6 in. Deep over Seat; 3 ft. 4 in. High; c. 1790. (C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

pattern are exceptional) that the seat of the former is nearly always upholstered with what is known as a "stitched-up" edge, rarely

with a drop-in seat, while in the latter it is often caned, as on page 259. Over this caning was laid a flat squab cushion, tied to the legs with tapes. With the chairs of Sheraton this does not apply, as many of the dining-room chairs have caned seats and often backs as well. The peculiar outward splay of the back legs of the chair on page 259 should be noted, as this detail is nearly always associated with models of high quality. On the next page are three examples which resemble each other very closely, again with the cross-railing introduced in the third and omitted in the other two.

The chair or settee with serpentine top rail, while belonging strictly to the Hepplewhite school, often approaches the designing manner of Adam, and in the instance of the "ladder-back" chair (see page 6 of Vol I.) that of Chippendale himself. We shall see, later on in this chapter, how in some examples the styles of Hepplewhite and Chippendale overlap. The small settees, with serpentine backs continuing in one unbroken sweep down to the arm-balusters, are among the most successful of the more simple Hepplewhite models. A typical example is given here on page 261. The chairs which

Mahogany Settee in the French (Louis XV.) Manner of Hepplewhite: 7 ft. 4½ in. Wide; 2 ft. 8 in. Deep over Seat; 3 ft. 6½ in. High; c. 1790. (C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

correspond to this style (four examples are shown on pages 262 and 263) are nearly always found with square untapered legs tied with a cross-

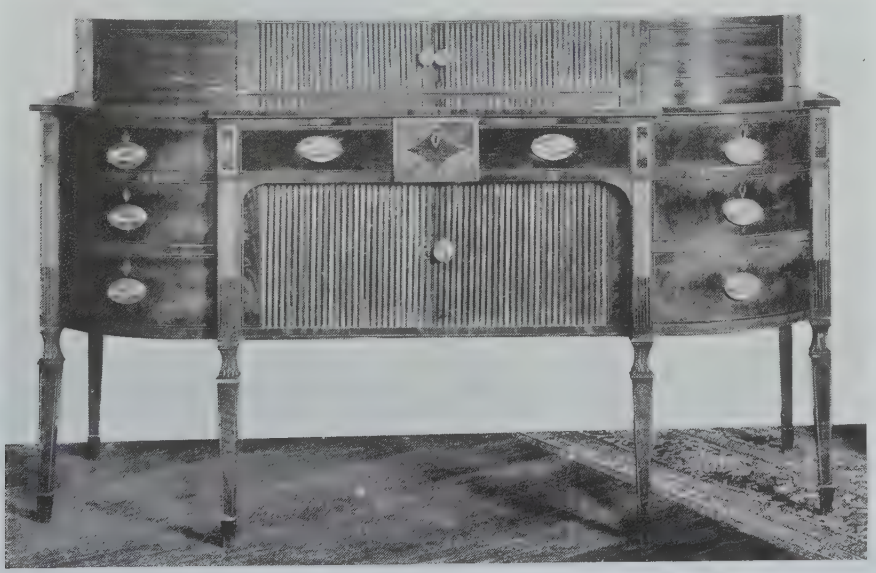
railing. It is difficult to apprehend why this stretchering should be such an integral part of the design of these chairs, yet there is no doubt that when this railing is absent, the design appears to be incomplete. The same may be said of the hoop-back (another pronounced Hepplewhite fashion) as in the two chairs on page 264; the upper one is unsatisfactory when compared with the example below. The sense of something lacking, in this absence of cross-railing, is still more noticeable on page 265. A comparison of the central splat of the fourth chair on this page with those of the four on page 254 will show the strong similarity, in details, of many of the models of this period. The hoop-back is merely a highly arched top rail, butt-jointed, with small mortise and tenon, to the back leg, which is also

Mahogany Side Table. The Adam-Hepplewhite Style, c. 1780. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

shaped to carry the sweep of the line down to the seat level. The square joint on the chair No. 3 on page 265, for example, is nearly

5 inches above the level of the top of the arm, and is taken right through to the front of the back itself. It is rare to find this joint concealed by any system of lamination or cross-banding. The element of weakness, consequent upon the cross-grain wood which this method of cutting a bold sweep entails, is compensated by a deep and strong housing of the central splat in the top rail.

The persistence of such patterns as the oval, the shield, and the hoop-back, side by side at the same period, suggests, in itself, that the workman of this period was poorly paid. Had his time been of any considerable value, one of these three, the hoop-back, would have ousted the other two, as being almost, if not quite as decorative, and far less costly, in time and material, to produce. Money in the



Mahogany Inlaid Sideboard. With Sliding Tambours above and below Central Drawer. The Upper Stage is Intended for Cruets and Small Articles; c. 1780. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

eighteenth century had a considerably greater purchasing power than it has at the present day, yet if we take a ratio of three to one

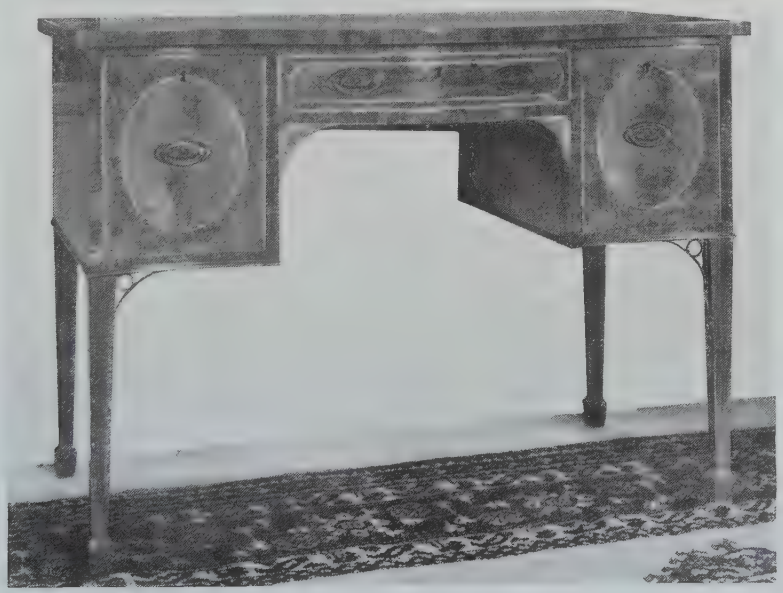
(and it cannot have been greater), the prices which were charged by a cabinet-maker of the status of Chippendale for the furniture at Gawthorp and Nostell, for example, presuppose the wages of the artisan to have been very low. Nor do wages bear any necessary relation to the cost of subsistence; it is only the superficial economist who imagines that such relation exists. The status of the workman, which had steadily deteriorated from the fifteenth century onwards, was fast approaching its uttermost limit of degradation in the closing years of the eighteenth century. In the first quarter of the nineteenth, some forty years after the death of Hepplewhite, the first Poor Law was inaugurated, not to relieve those who were unemployed, but to assist the artisan, who, at full wages and with only normal responsibilities, was in grave danger of starving at his bench. Those who take a justifiable pride in possessing examples of the rich and fine craftsmanship of the later eighteenth century, do not think, and frequently

Mahogany Inlaid Sideboard with Upper Stage for the Display of Silver. Three Napery and Two Cellarette Drawers; c. 1790. *(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)*

do not know, the conditions of dire poverty in which much of it must have been produced. Savage laws, at this period, threatened the

direst punishment on any assemblage of workmen, combined for the purpose of raising the economic status of their class.

The last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed the anomaly of a slight increase only in the wages of the artisan, from 24s. to 27s. in the case of the cabinet-maker, at the same time when the cost of living was almost doubled. While this era of high prices and low wages existed in England, the cost of commodities was extremely low on the Continent, and only the arbitrary and outrageous fiscal system in this country enabled this state of iniquity to persist. Thus a foreign glut and an English famine were separated only by twenty miles of water, yet the laws here maintained these conditions of a set purpose. Yet, withal, it was an age of fine craftsmanship, and in mechanical perfection has never been surpassed. With



Mahogany Inlaid Sideboard : 4 ft. 4 in. Wide; 2 ft. 6 in. Deep ; 3 ft. 2¼ in. High. Two Cellarette Drawers. Legs Tapered on Inside Faces only; c. 1790. *(Cecil Millar, Esq.)*

this digression we can return to the subject of the chairs of the Hepplewhite period.

While it is exceptional to find the shield-back with a solid upholstered panel, the hoop-back is often filled in this way. On page 266 are two examples, of which the second is very similar in detail to the settee on page 261. Both show the influence of Robert Adam very strongly. It must be pointed out, however, that much of this upholstery is often of later date. The stuffed seat was often associated with the caned back, and when this caning became defective, in the

Mahogany Inlaid Semicircular Sideboard. This Type is peculiar to the Hepplewhite School, c. 1785–90. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

natural order of things, it was replaced by upholstery as a cheaper, and more satisfactory alternative. The presence of this former caning

is not always easy to detect. With the seats of chairs, the framing was bored through to permit of the insertion of the necessary plugs, but with the backs, where the holes would have been unsightly, the usual plan was to make a groove on the outside face, and, after the caning was finished, to fill this up with wooden fillets. Where such insertions are evident, on a careful examination, it is an indication of original caning, and shows that the upholstery is a subsequent addition.

While neither in England nor in France were the furniture styles of the eighteenth century circumscribed by the actual duration of the reigns of kings, yet the defined manner to which the name of the Louis XVI. style has been given begins shortly after that monarch ascended the throne of France in 1774. If we accept the Hepplewhite style as coinciding with the publication of the first edition of the "Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" (1788), then that of the Louis XVI. must have been well established in France if not in England. If the Hepplewhite period is some eight or ten years earlier than this (which is more probable, as the "Guide"

Mahogany Inlaid Angle Sideboard. Segmental in Front. Right-angled at Back to fit into a Corner. Very rare form, c. 1790. *(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)*

was a posthumous publication, and there are evidences of a large, if not prosperous business career behind it), there remain still

some four or five years for the French style to cross the Channel and to be adopted in England, with such modifications as English craftsmen would suggest, as a matter of course. That the style was known here, and was the design-basis of one, if not two, of the different phases of Hepplewhite's manner, we know from the "Guide" itself. It is curious, therefore, to notice that this particular French inspiration is hardly ever acknowledged. When the phrase "in the French taste" is used, it is always the Louis XV. style which is indicated. Thus, chairs such as those on page 267, or the two settees on pages 268 and 269, are generally known as "French" in the design books of this period. Excepting for the fact that the English settee and the French *canapé* differ in general form, the Louis XV.

Mahogany Inlaid Sideboard. The Type which belongs both to Hepplewhite and Sheraton, c. 1790–1800. (*Messrs. Gregory and Co.*)

details of the shaped or cabriole leg, with the seat moulding continuing down the leg in one continuous sweep, are copied, almost literally,

in many of these Hepplewhite models. It is only in subtle details that the English character of many of these chairs can be differentiated

Mahogany Tray, c. 1790. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

from the French. How closely these chairs and settees approximate to the French models will be remarked in the two chairs on page 267, and the settee on page 269. Similar details will be remarked, in the instance of commodes and tables, at a later stage in this chapter.

Before leaving the subject of the chair or the settee for other furniture of the Hepplewhite school, an appreciation of the exquisite workmanship of the former, and especially of those models in the "French taste," must be recorded here. If we examine such pieces as the two chairs on page 267, or the settee on page 269, even in the illustrations here, it will be noticed that, in the majority of instances, the tenons at the joints are "pitched"—that is, not in the direct line with the sweep of seat or back rail. As gluing relies upon the cramp, or other means of compression, for its success, and as it is obvious that such cramping can have no direct bearing here, in fact, would force

the joints apart rather than together, it is surprising how rare it is to find an open joint in the chairs and settees of this period, even after the lapse of upwards of 150 years of use. While it is often the habit to extol the older craftsmanship at the expense of the new, there is no doubt that the chair-maker of the eighteenth century is unrivalled by his fellow of the present day. In an age of low wages, time was, necessarily, of lesser value. To the collector of to-day

Mahogany Tea Table with Urn Slide. The Chippendale-Hepplewhite Manner of c. 1770. *(Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)*

this has its advantage; the poverty and degrading conditions of the workmen of the later eighteenth century have receded to proper

Mahogany Library Bookcase. Height: Lower Carcase, 3 ft. 2 in; Upper (without Pediments), 4 ft. 9 in.; Width (Lower): Wings, 1 ft. 7½ in.; Centre, 3 ft. 11 in. The Style of Hepplewhite inspired from the same Source as that of Chippendale, c. 1760–70. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)

perspective. The blood and stripes of the American slave never stained the cotton which entered English mills, to leave, as a finished fabric, to clothe others, perhaps as degraded, in another quarter of the globe.

Mahogany Wardrobe : 5 ft. 11 in. High ; 4 ft. 5 in. Wide ; 2 ft. 3 in. Deep. The Chippendale-Hepplewhite Manner, c. 1780. (C. D. Rotch, Esq.)

But then, as Wilde remarked, there is something unspeakably sordid about other people's tragedies!

While the school of Hepplewhite borrowed freely from the brothers Adam, the turned tapered leg, clothed with the water-leaf, as on the side table on page 270, is a detail peculiarly its own, and one

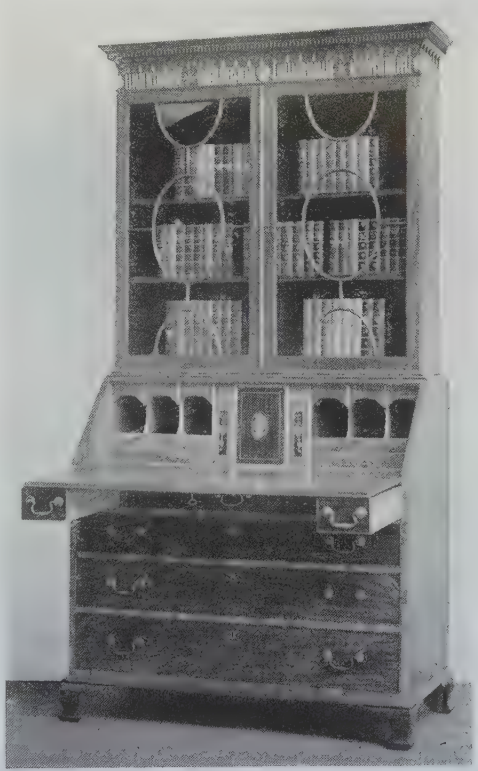
Mahogany Secretaire Library Bookcase, c. 1780. (Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)

of which it made very effective use. We have seen that much of the credit for originality which has been so lavishly bestowed upon

Thomas Chippendale was ill deserved, as he merely gave book prominence to fashions which were current for years before he arrived in London. With Hepplewhite, or his followers, the case is otherwise. While what we know as the Hepplewhite style may have been grounded

Mahogany Library Bookcase. Straight Lattice-Work and Crown Glass in Upper Doors, c. 1780–90. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

by Robert and James Adam, the style itself is many-sided enough to give credit for originality to Hepplewhite without injustice to Adam. Much of what is characteristic Hepplewhite owes little or nothing to Adelphi influence. Thus the tambour, a number of beads or strips glued to a flexible canvas, is the device of a cabinet-maker, and appears to have become popular in France and England almost simultaneously. Unlike the solid cylinder, which requires a corresponding space at the back for its revolution, the tambour can slide almost at a right angle In the upper stage of the sideboard on page 271, for example, the opening of the tambour does not interfere, in any way, with the drawers on either side. A piece such as this is admirable for the dining-room, more decorative, commodious, and convenient than any of the side tables of the Chippendale period, or earlier. Some of these two-tier sideboards were made with an upper stage intended only for the display of silver, made without drawers or cupboards, as on page 272. The narrow pedestals, each containing a deep cellarette with simulated drawer-fronts, give an appearance of elegance which the broader pedestal lacks. The absence of two legs at the back, to correspond with those on the front, is an instance of economy in manufacture which one encounters, so frequently, in much of this eighteenth-century furniture. For actual strength, as well as appearance, their



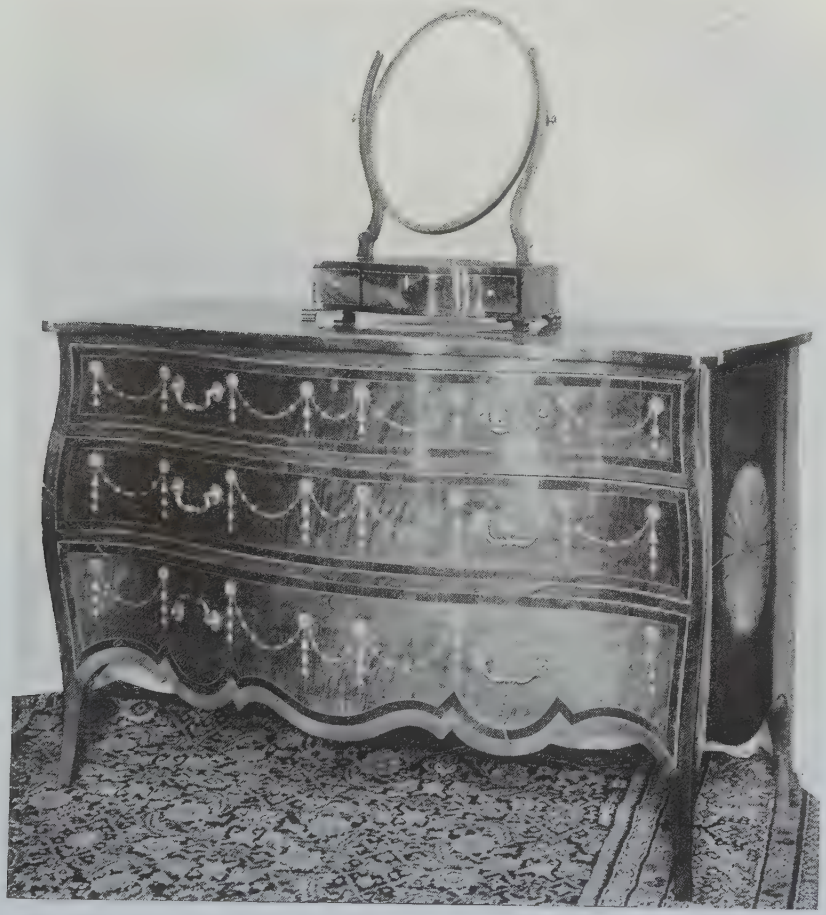
Mahogany Bureau Bookcase with Typical Hepplewhite Cornice and Frieze, c. 1780–90.

presence would be desirable, as in these long sideboards there is always a tendency to sag, the effect of which is noticeable in the running of the central drawers.

The influence of Hepplewhite is not only conspicuous in much of

Harewood and Marqueterie Commode (One of a Pair). The French Manner of the Hepplewhite School, c. 1780. (Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.)

the furniture made in the years between 1775 and 1790, but in silver as well. We know that vases, candlesticks, cups, and epergnes were designed by Robert Adam for many of his wealthy clients, but many pieces of silver and plate are to be found which exhibit the manner of Hepplewhite in a fashion equally as unmistakable. That these



Harewood and Marqueterie Chest of Drawers. The French Manner of Hepplewhite, c. 1780–90. *(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

were made to accord with the furniture of the same period is extremely probable, and the hall-marks are nearly always those of Sheffield or

London. Much of this true Hepplewhite silver was made to be displayed on sideboards such as those illustrated here, unless we adopt the contrary suggestion, that Hepplewhite owed his inspiration to the wares of the silversmith. This, however, is negatived by the evidence of the date-letters of the hall-marks, which show that the furniture is nearly always earlier than the silver.

On page 273 is an interesting small sideboard, entirely veneered with mahogany, with a very narrow edging and stringing of satinwood, and a fan inlay in the small brackets under the central drawer. Effec-

A Cylinder Bureau in Hepplewhite French Manner, c. 1785. (*Messrs. Rice and Christy.*)

tive use has been made of light and deeper toned mahogany veneers on the two cellarette drawers. The pierced brackets which join the

legs to the boxes of the cellarettes are of brass, and are later additions to prevent sagging. The legs have the characteristic inside taper which is found so often in these refined Hepplewhite pieces, and finish in gracefully moulded toes. This sideboard is unusually deep for its width, and, apart from the added brass brackets, is in its original condition throughout, even to its oval brass handles. Original brass-work of this period is rarer than would be imagined, owing to the high proportion of zinc in the alloy rendering the brass very susceptible

Mahogany Commode Inlaid with Marqueterie. The French Bombé Manner of Hepplewhite, c. 1780–90. *(Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.)*

to atmospheric erosion. It is the zinc which oxidises and perishes; the copper is comparatively immune. The very subdued and refined

The Top of the Table below.

Centre Table of Various Woods Inlaid with Marqueterie. The Style of Hepplewhite directly copied from the French, c. 1780–90. (*Messrs. Rice and Christy.*)

serpentine sweep of the front of this sideboard should be noted. Where this form is very pronounced, on sideboards and tables, the pieces themselves are rarely of high quality.

If Hepplewhite influenced the trade of the silversmith (which can hardly be denied), the same is true of the cabinet brass-founder. Not a little of the interest of these refined pieces of the later eighteenth century is due to the finely designed handles and lock-plates which are to be found on them. Unfortunately many have perished, or have been replaced in Victorian times. The usual forms of the Hepplewhite handle were either oval or circular, with back-plates to correspond, moulded and pearl-edged (" beaded " is the trade term), occasionally centred with a chased rosette. The loop on which the ring-handle swivels is carried on a screwed bolt, taken right through the door or drawer-front, and secured at the back by a nut. It is not uncommon, especially on small pieces veneered with satinwood or sycamore, to find handles and lock-plates either of solid silver or plated on brass.

Mahogany Toilet Tables in the French Manner of the Hepplewhite School, c. 1780.

Sideboard shapes of the later eighteenth century are exceedingly varied, although the serpentine, the concave, the bow front, and the

semicircle are the most generally used, either singly or in combination. The semicircular front is, perhaps, the rarest. It has the advantage of possessing no corners against which a servant carrying

Semicircular Commode of Harewood and Satinwood Inlaid with Marqueterie : 4 ft. 3 in. Wide ; 2 ft. 11 in. High ; 1 ft. 9 in. Deep ; c. 1770–80.

a loaded tray can collide, but the form necessitates the deep cellarette drawers being constructed to run with an inward splay, with the

result that the central drawer is triangular on plan, and its capacity much restricted, in consequence. I have found many of these semicircular sideboards which have been reconstructed, to obviate this defect. The cellarette drawers have been transformed into cupboards by cutting away the sides and hinging the fronts. The presence of the dovetails usually gives the clue to what has been done, and the transforming of the central drawer from triangular to rectangular form is also usually evident. These semicircular sideboards, in their original state, are valuable pieces, and even when altered, in the manner described above, they still command high prices. It is important to notice whether the top has been re-veneered, as this is a serious defect. From its semicircular form, this description of sideboard is always very deep, as nearly as possible half as much as its width, and the original veneer always has one joint, at least. Where saw-cut mahogany veneer is used, this is inevitable. Unfortunately, a modern process has been devised where the veneer is cut round the log (the unrolling of a piece of wall-paper will illustrate the method) and any reasonable width can thus be obtained. This knife-cut veneer is very thin, and, owing to the method employed, is without figure or ornamental marking; dull and lifeless. It is never used for good work, yet I saw, not long ago, a fine semicircular sideboard, with the veneers, on the front, bleached to a beautiful golden shade, but where the top had been relaid with

Mahogany Toilet Table. Hepplewhite's Use of the Water-Leaf, c. 1780–90.

this detestable knife-cut veneer, presumably to avoid the trouble and the trifling expense of making a joint. Economy—or, rather, parsimony—could not well go further than this.

Mahogany Wardrobe, Showing the Extensive Use of Curl Veneer by the Hepplewhite School, c. 1780 (*The Author.*)

Mahogany Wardrobe Inlaid with Marqueterie : 7 ft. 8 in. High ; 4 ft. Wide ; 1 ft. 11½ in. Deep (Upper Part) ; c. 1780. (C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

The triangular drawer, which one finds so frequently in tables and sideboards of the late eighteenth century, is one of the few really unsatisfactory features in the furniture of this period. It is obvious that a drawer of this form cannot open in the usual manner, as it would fit tightly only when closed. The only method by which it can be made to operate is to make a groove underneath, from the centre of the front to the point of the back, and provide a corresponding runner inside the drawer-aperture. Unless one looks underneath, therefore, the runner and groove are invisible. The drawer, when pulled out half-way, is apparently loose, yet guided by the runner. Those who take a pride in a well-fitting drawer experience something of a mental shock on a first practical acquaintance with one of this wedge kind. For those who demand a circular table with the framing entirely filled with drawers, there is no other alternative, but the device is more ingenious than satisfying to a person of taste or with a knowledge of craftsmanship. Added to this unfortunate appearance,

Mahogany Wardrobe, Dated 1772.

the function of a drawer is to contain something, papers in the case of a writing table, or napery in a sideboard. These wedge-drawers have no such capacity, owing to their form, and are, therefore, mere useless contrivances designed only for the sake of appearance.

Mahogany Double-Chest, c. 1780. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

A very unusual form of sideboard is shown on page 275, made in the form of an exact quarter circle, so that it can be fitted into a corner. Here, as the inevitable result of the two cellarette drawers meeting each other at right angles, the central drawer is of the same plan as the sideboard itself, in reduced scale, and, therefore, with its capacity much curtailed. Even with this disadvantage, however, the convenience of a sideboard which will fit into a corner is so great, and at the same time, so decorative in effect, that it is surprising the form was not used more frequently, yet this is the only example I have ever seen.

The bow-front, that is, where the top is shaped in one unbroken curve from end to end, or the form of the straight centre with segmental flanks (as on page 276) belong both to the schools of Hepplewhite and Sheraton, which, in view of the

prior date of the first, is equivalent to saying that these types originated with the former and were adopted by the latter. Judging only by the published designs of both (and we have no other criterion), Sheraton is inferior to Hepplewhite in a sense of proportion, but possibly his superior in the use of decorative detail, especially of inlay. I am inclined to think that Shearer (whose "Designs for Household Furniture" appeared in the same year as the first edition of the "Guide" of Hepplewhite) was the master of both, in this respect. Considerable allowance has to be made, in any such estimate, for the indifferent and mannered draughtsmanship of this period (chairs, for example, being shown in acute perspective, nearly always from an eye-line of at least six feet in height), and for the loss, in creative spirit, which must happen with any sketch translated into the mechanical method of line engraving on copper.

Mahogany Bureau Cabinet, c. 1780. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

Thomas Shearer's name figures on the title-page of the "Cabinet-Makers' London Book of Prices" (1st edition) in 1788, as author or editor, and on that of the re-issue in 1793 bracketed with Hepplewhite and Casement. The Hepplewhite,

Mahogany Inlaid Wardrobe : 7 ft. 7 in. High ; 4 ft. 2½ in. Wide ; 1 ft. 10 in. Deep ; c. 1780.
(C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.)

here referred to, must have been a business name only, as the founder of the Cripplegate firm must have been dead nearly seven years at this date. The "Book of Prices" went through many editions, and was in use, as a standard work, as late as 1880. Every journeyman was expected to possess a copy, as his wages were calculated from its pages. Piecework (or payment by the job, instead of by the hour) was the rule, rather than the exception, up to 1872, if not later, and instead of a price being agreed upon, in advance (which would have led to considerable haggling, and not a few serious mistakes), the job was given out and "priced up" from the "book." Practically every operation known to the cabinet-maker was set out in priced tables. Thus, the work-

Mahogany Wardrobe, Similar to Patterns illustrated in Hepplewhite's "Guide," c. 1780–90.

man would begin, say, with a simple table, 5 feet wide and 3 feet deep, and would build up his account with extras, for hardwood (oak, walnut, or mahogany), veneering, shaping, moulding, inlaying, for one or more drawers, beading or moulding the fronts, fitting handles and locks, castoring the legs, polishing, and so on, almost *ad infinitum*. It was impossible for these tables not to overlap, and a workman who "knew his book" (hence probably, the familiar phrase) could always bring his account out to a few shillings more than one who was not so well acquainted with it. A general shop foreman had to know the "book" almost by heart, as a necessary preliminary to

Mahogany Card Table: Top 2 ft. 11½ in. by 2 ft. 11½ in.; 2 ft. 5½ in. High (Closed); c. 1780. (The Author.)

his engagement. Even to the last, the editions of the "Book of Prices" were illustrated with engraved plates bearing the names of the

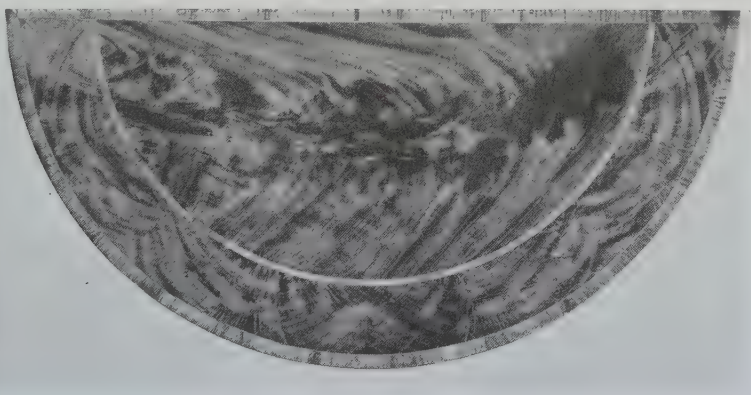
well-known eighteenth-century cabinet-makers (possibly culled from their published works), but in the later years the book was stated to be "Compiled by an Association of Masters and Workmen," and no authors' names appeared on the title. It may be only an imperfect memory of an "old-timer," but I have the idea that with the abolition of the "Price Book" departed much of the fine tradition of English cabinet-making. Certainly the institution of piecework, although capable of some obvious abuses, did not penalise the good and quick workman at the expense of his slow and inefficient brother, and undoubtedly helped to maintain workmanship at a high level. The present-day system of payment by the hour often leads only to the making of a time-sheet, the work itself being merely of minor importance. It is certain that none of the furniture illustrated in these pages was produced in this way.

Mahogany Semicircular Card Table, c. 1780. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

The institution of piece-work—that is, payment according to the amount of work done, is of very ancient date in England. It is difficult to understand how it could have fallen into abeyance, as, from the standpoint of the worker, nothing could be more equitable than payment according to performance. The only obvious drawback, that one workman might sacrifice quality to

speed of output, is one which concerns the master only. The true reason for the decline is to be found in the fact that whereas payment by the hour or day penalised the good or quick workmen compared with his less efficient fellow-craftsman, there was always the tendency, with piecework, to lower prices until none but the exceptionally rapid worker

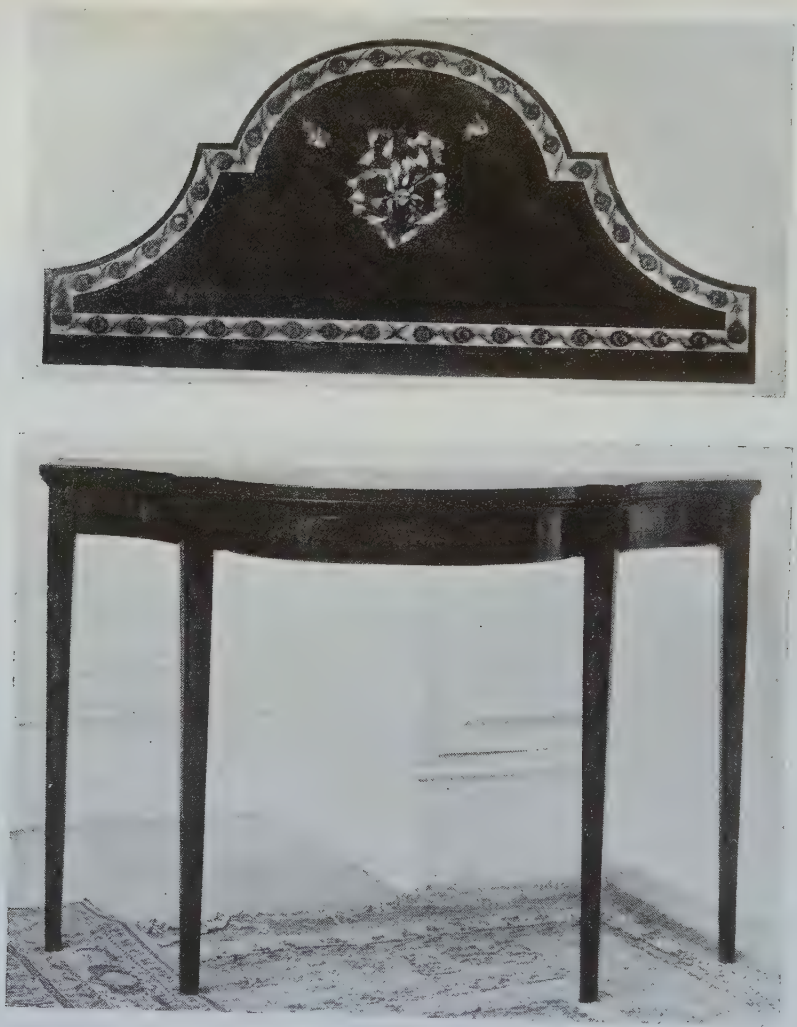
could exist. I suppose it is natural (it is certainly unreasonable) for a master to grumble at paying double wages for twice the normal output, in spite of the fact that the quick workman helps to economise in such



Tops of Card Tables of the Hepplewhite Period, c. 1780. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

items as rent, lighting, and heating. There is the idea that such a man will accept a reduced price, although such reduction will be detrimental

to the shop as a whole. One can hardly wonder, with this tendency on the part of the generality of masters, that the good and rapid workman is viewed askance by his fellows, and is seldom popular in a shop.



Mahogany Side Table Inlaid and Painted, Showing the Effective Use of the "Eye" of the Peacock's Feather, c. 1780.

One point is always missed, in this short-sighted policy on the part of both masters and workmen, that the former has to estimate, or

price his work, and is, therefore, in effect, a piece-worker himself. It is also the bane of the present system of competitive estimating, that the labour factor has to be guessed, and the master must add a contingency percentage to safeguard himself against the slow or inefficient artisan. Masters had the remedy, that of piece-work, in their hands as late as the middle years of the nineteenth century, but in their greed, they abused it by the endeavour to force down prices. With the want of incentive which payment by the hour engendered, the general status of production has been lowered, and as the consumer, or client, is the donkey upon whose back all burdens are placed, the one of inefficient production has been added.

* * * * *

The oval trays of the last quarter of the eighteenth century are very desirable pieces for the collector. They were made for carrying the tea equipage, afternoon tea being a very fashionable function at this period, and great was the amount of scandal which was exchanged across the teacups. These pretty oval trays, other than those inlaid with marqueterie, are not rare. A good representative example is given on page 277. The mahogany tea table on the next page, which has a slide on which the "hissing urn" could be placed (a somewhat dangerous practice, according to modern notions), is interesting in showing the overlapping of the styles of two schools, Chippendale and Hepplewhite, without being exactly in the manner of either. The fine library bookcase on page 279 is more defined, and the source of inspiration of many of

"*Rudd's Table*," (1) *Closed*, *c.* 1780.

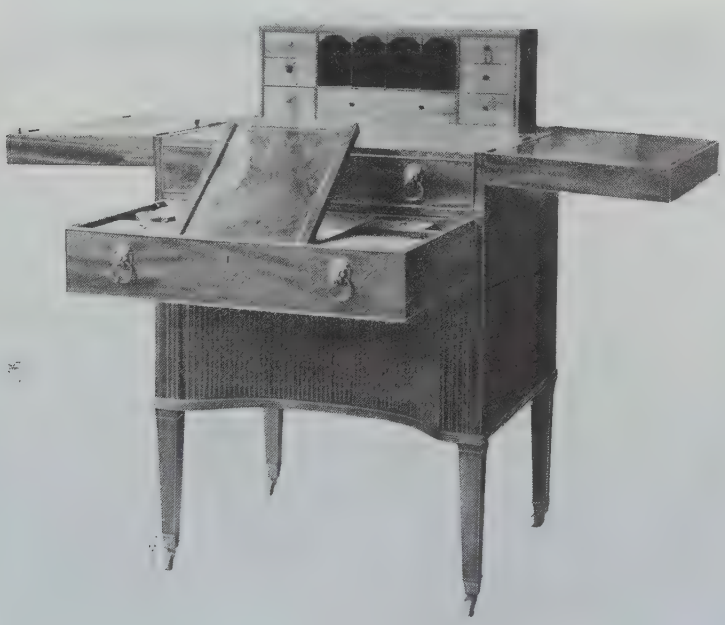
the details, especially of the moulding of the lower doors, is earlier even than Chippendale, yet there are others, notably the decoration of the cornice and pediment, which indicate the period of the school of Hepplewhite. Unfortunately much of the later fret-work, as on the lower drawers here, was no longer carved from the solid, but applied; a method which involved considerably less labour and expense, but left much of the decoration at the mercy of the adhesive qualities of the glue, which, in its nature, could not be permanent.

The prevalence of bookcases in the later years of the eighteenth century may be taken as an indication that books had become more plentiful at this date. The bookcase was an exceptional piece in the walnut years of Anne and George I., as we have seen already; it was

"Rudd's Table" (2) Open, Showing the Writing and Reading Slopes.

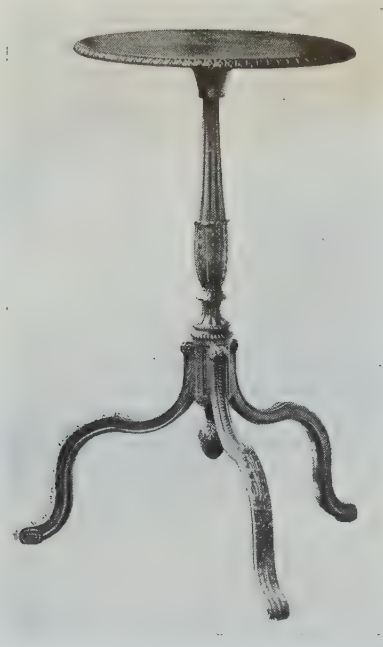
not a usual article of furniture even during the early period of Chippendale. The "Director" contains designs for bookcases, but these

are small in size, and very few were actually made. In the days when binding was a work of art, where books were sewn on cords laced into the covers, and finished in leather with elaborate tooling, instead of the modern method where the book is merely secured in a separately made case, with buckram or canvas joints, a library must have been a costly, if not a valuable, possession. It is possible, of course, that only the well-bound books have survived to our day, but, judging from the contents, it appears to have been the custom to bind every book, from the classic to the merest literary rubbish, in this fine manner. The eighteenth century was emphatically not the age of cheap production, and books of any kind were not for the million. Even at the present day, with our much-vaunted education, the books which sell in numbers are usually trashy novels that



"*Rudd's Table*" (3), *Showing the Toilet Drawer Open.*

contribute little or nothing to the intellectual advancement of a nation.



Mahogany Tripod Table, c. 1780. (*Capt. The Hon. Sir John H. Ward, K.C.V.O.*)

One often encounters pieces where the style of Hepplewhite encroaches on that of Chippendale, such as the wardrobe on page 280. Here the doors are rule-jointed so that they will open only to an exact right angle, and on the insides runners are provided to support the trays inside when they are drawn out. It is obvious that without this rule-joint, a catastrophe would occur when the trays were pulled out on the door-runners. On pages 281 and 282 are the true Hepplewhite book-cases, the first with a fall-front secretaire drawer in the centre of the lower part, and a charming shaped lattice-work in the upper doors. In the second, the latticing is square, and the glazing is the original crown glass of the period, with the whirling marks of the "pontil" producing a quaint effect in varied reflections in the uneven surfaces. One of the bureau book-cases of this period with the typical "pear-drop" cornice and inlaid frieze of the Hepplewhite period, is shown on page 283. The device of support-

Mahogany Urn Table, c. 1780.

ing the bureau-flap on two small drawers is not unusual with these late pieces, but is exceptional in those of the early Georgian period.

One constructional feature, that of the flush-panelled door, is peculiar to the schools of Hepplewhite and Sheraton, and is rare before about 1775, in walnut or mahogany. It is obvious that well-seasoned timber was of the first importance, especially when the flush face was veneered, as any shrinkage would be immediately noticeable, either in the opening of joints or the cracking of veneer. Sheraton (who was a practical craftsman of a high order) recommends pine for veneering, in place of hard wood, as the wood is milder and not so prone to warp or shrink, in consequence. As an extra precaution, he suggests that boards should be sawn into three pieces, in their length, the central one reversed, and the three glued together again. He also prefers

Mahogany Tripod Pole Screen, c. 1780.

Mahogany Tripod Pole Screen, c. 1780.

clamping to framing, although any shrinkage is just as fatal with this method as with framing, as if the panel shrink the clamps will project on either side. A clamped door is also much more liable to "cast" than a framed one, especially if it be veneered on the one side only. On the other hand, a flush-panelled framed door, which is flush on the outside face only, cannot be veneered on its reverse side, and the panel itself is liable to bulge.

If we are prepared to accept as Chippendale the actual work of that cabinet-maker (as distinguished from his published designs, the greater number of which are in the style which we know by his name) then such pieces as the two commodes, one of which is illustrated on page 284, may originate, actually, from the St. Martin's Lane workshops. Furniture, similar in style to this, was made by Chippendale for Harewood House (as we know from his invoices which are preserved), and the influence of Robert Adam is not suggested. These pieces, which involve intricate veneering, inlay of marqueterie and mounts of chased and gilded brass, are better described as in the French manner of the Hepplewhite school, and copy the models of the Louis Quinze period very closely. They are true commodes, as distinguished from the elaborate chests of drawers which are often described by the same name.

A surface which is shaped in the one direction only, such as a concave, serpentine, or bow front, can be veneered by the use of a hot caul of wood, cut to fit the particular shape, with a piece of stout felt laid between the caul and the veneered surface, to ensure adequate and even pressure everywhere. Something of the problem of the laying of veneers has been outlined in Chapter XI. of the first volume. It is usually assumed that glue is an adhesive which will stick two pieces of wood together, and anyhow. This is very far removed from the fact. An imperfect joint (that is, where the two surfaces do not cohere exactly) or where any grease is present, will not hold when glued. Secondly, any excess of glue, if allowed to remain between a veneer and its ground, will perish after a while, and the veneer will blister. In laying a veneer, therefore, not only must adequate caul-pressure be employed, but this must commence from

the centre, in order to drive any excess of glue to the outer edges. Any force of handscrews, cramps, or veneering presses, must, therefore, be applied to the centre first, and, with a flat surface to be veneered, the caul may be slightly convex, with advantage.

Mahogany Pole Screen: 4 ft. 10 in. High; Base 10 in. Diameter; c. 1780. (*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

A second important point is that the glue with which the surface is coated must be allowed to become quite cold *before the veneer is laid down.* With hot glue, the veneer will expand immediately, and owing to the drying and adhering, cannot contract again. It will, therefore, remain in a state of strain, and will crack at the first opportunity. The heat should be applied by the caul (which can be as hot as possible) and the handscrews fixed quickly, before the veneer has time to expand.

Where the shaping is complicated, such as in the instance of a *bombé* front (see page 287) or the chest of drawers on page 285, no wooden caul can be made which will fit exactly, and here one of two methods must be employed. The first is to lay the veneer with the hammer (a tool something like a small hatchet with the head fixed transversely); the second, to place a bag or pad, filled with fine silver sand, between the caul and the veneer, to take up any surface inequalities and exercise an even pressure everywhere. Small cross-banded pieces, such as on the legs of the charming little cylinder bureau on page 286, especially when on double-shaped surfaces, are always laid with the hammer, the veneer being soaked with thin glue to give it the necessary pliability. The correct use of the veneering hammer is an art which is not readily acquired. The operation must be quick (or the glue will set) and exact, without

moving the piece of veneer which is being laid, or a bad joint will result. The cylinder of this bureau would be laid with the caul and sand-bag; it would be impossible to maintain the bending strain of the central satinwood oval with the hammer.

A somewhat ingenious device, often found in small cylinder bureaux of French or Belgian origin, but sometimes met with in English pieces, is to attach the pull-out slide to the back edge of the cylinder. The pulling forward of the slide throws back the cylinder at the same operation. The slide is necessary to give adequate writing space, as the cylinder, unlike the tambour, requires the same space behind as it occupies when closed, describing, as it must do, an exact semicircle.

Of these French pieces of the Hepplewhite school, the centre table on page 288 and the two pretty toilet tables on page 289 are further examples, to which detailed reference is unnecessary, in view of the foregoing. When of fine detail and workmanship, they are rare and valuable pieces.

The semicircular commodes, as on page 290, are examples of veneering under strain, and it must be remembered that the same stress is taken by each piece of the inlaid marqueterie, which will spring away and break if not well glued. The fashion for these elaborately inlaid or painted commodes originated with Robert Adam, who employed such artists as Cipriani, Pergolesi and Angelica Kauffmann for his decorative painting, and Chippendale and the Seddons for his cabinet work and inlay.

The bedroom furniture of the Hepplewhite school is nearly always well made, and richly veneered. On page 292 is one of the small wash-tables of this date, which shows, from its small size, that washing must have been a virtue of secondary importance, even in the later Georgian period. The extensive use which was made of fine curl mahogany veneers is evident in the charming wardrobe on page 292, with which I may claim an intimate knowledge of many years. On the next page is a more ornate example, inlaid with marqueterie and stringing. Perhaps the best of the three—certainly the most personal—is the wardrobe on page 294, where the initials J.B. and S.B. are

introduced into the fret design of the pediment, and the date 1772 into the akroter. A piece such as this was made, in all probability, to commemorate a marriage, although who J.B. or S.B. were, we cannot even conjecture.

These small mahogany wardrobes, fitted with trays behind the upper doors, and three or four drawers below, were made to occupy one of the recesses on either side of the bedroom chimney breast, the pendant pieces being either "tallboy" chests, such as on page 295, or bureau cabinets, as on the next page. Unfortunately, it is rare, nowadays, to find the pair undivorced.

Small pieces, such as card or side tables of this Hepplewhite period, are usually well designed and finely made. Two examples are illustrated here, all of high quality, and on page 301 are two of the tops of card tables of this date.

It is questionable whether these delicate tables, especially those with painted tops, were not made as decorative pieces of furniture, merely, rather than for actual play. The wear, by abrasion, of a painted border such as on the upper example on page 301, when thrown back on the top edge of the pull-out leg (with which this border would come in actual contact), would soon deface the surface of the ornament. Gambling had not diminished, by any means, in the later Georgian period, but play was more usual in clubs such as White's, Brooks's, and Watiers' than in private houses. The decorative value, as furniture, of these painted or inlaid card tables could only be appreciated when they were not in use. At the same period, side tables, such as on page 302, were made to match or accord with them, and it is not exceptional to find these late card tables in pairs, which suggests that they were made rather for ornament than use.

Considerable ingenuity was exhibited in the devising of some of the multiple pieces, such as the table on pages 303, 304, and 305, which is referred to by Hepplewhite as "Rudd's table."

Hepplewhite illustrates it on Plate 79 of the "Guide," and the following is his description of it:

> *"Rudd's Table or Reflecting Dressing Table. This is the most complete Dressing Table made, possessing every convenience which*

can be wanted, or mechanism and ingenuity supply. It derives its name from a once popular character, for whom it is reported it was first invented."

Hepplewhite's plate does not agree with the illustration here, but the name appears to have been used to describe any compact table adapted for many uses. The "once popular character" for whom it was devised, indicates that the pattern was an old one, in the trade, even in Hepplewhite's day. The earlier editions of the "London Book of Prices" refer to it, with directions for its manufacture, but the description does not agree with the plate in the "Guide." Ingenious contrivances of this kind appear to have been very popular in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The tripod furniture of the Hepplewhite school, while differing little, if at all, from that of Chippendale, in constructive principles, is quite distinct in its general design. Proportions are more delicate, as a rule, as in the table on page 306, where extensive use is made of the water-leaf, and in such pieces as small banner screens, the tripods are rarely carved, and often finished from the shaping-saw without rounding, with tapered toes and scratch-moulded beads on the edges. Although delicate, and even attenuated in their proportions, they possess adequate strength, as the fragility of their appearance is, in itself, a precaution against unfair usage.

This delicate tripod furniture, depending almost entirely on grace of line and accuracy of proportion, is, perhaps, among the most successful creations of the Hepplewhite school. With the more elaborate tripods of Chippendale, whether of tables or banner screens, an excess of carving is often employed to hide certain basic faults. With Hepplewhite, carving is merely an added decoration, and is often omitted entirely. His claim to originality is somewhat discounted by his own statement, in the Preface to the "Guide": "To unite elegance and utility, and blend the useful with the agreeable, has ever been considered a difficult but an honourable task. How far we have succeeded in the following work it becomes us not to say, but rather to leave it, with all due deference, to the determination of the Public at large."

"To Residents in London, *although our drawings are all new, yet, as we designedly followed the latest and most prevailing fashion only*, purposely omitting such articles whose recommendation was mere novelty, and perhaps a violation of all established rule, the production of whim at the instance of caprice,* whose appetite must ever suffer disappointment if any similar thing had been previously thought of; we say, having regularly avoided these fancies, and steadily adhered to such articles only as are of general use and service, one principal hope for favour and encouragement will be in having combined near three hundred different patterns for furniture in so small a space, and at so small a price."

While Sheraton (whose life and work will be considered in the next chapter) carried on the Hepplewhite tradition in his first years in London, the style persisted without his aid, and remained in fashion until almost the closing years of the eighteenth century. It was only submerged in the tide of the so-called "English Empire," a manner largely copied from that of the court of Napoleon. It is curious that a man so hated and feared, as the little Corsican undoubtedly was, should have been instrumental in introducing this bad travesty of the Roman, mingled with the worst in French decorative art, into England as a popular, if not a national style. To those who have an appreciative eye for the fine work of the Hepplewhite school, this is a calamity as far as English design and craftsmanship is concerned, a victory for Napoleon more crushing, because more lasting in its effects, than Wagram, Jena or Austerlitz could have been. It has, also, the added sting of being a posthumous triumph, as Waterloo had been won and lost before the English Empire finally attained its supremacy, and the last vestiges of the inheritance bequeathed by the master designers of the eighteenth century had finally disappeared.

* Is not "Rudd's Table" an example of "the production of whim at the instance of caprice"?

CHAPTER XI

FURNITURE OF THE SHERATON SCHOOL

OF the intimate life-history of Thomas Sheraton, cabinet-maker, teacher of drawing, itinerant preacher, writer of Scriptural pamphlets and tracts, and the last of the furniture designers of the eighteenth century, we know more than we do even of Thomas Chippendale, and certainly of George Hepplewhite. The latter is almost a nebulous figure, as far as English furniture is concerned, as his book of designs, in spite of its comparatively large sale in three editions, and the wide influence which we know it exercised on the trade, was a posthumous publication, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Sheraton was a native of Stockton-on-Tees, born in that town about 1750. He was still there some thirty years later, preaching in Baptist chapels and writing tracts. One of these, "A Scriptural Illustration of the Doctrine of Regeneration," bears the imprint, Stockton, and the date 1782. The acute observer might trace the cause of Sheraton's want of success in life to this habit of preaching. It is the business of an ordained clergyman, and on his eloquence depends, largely, his advancement in the clerical world. The layman has no such prospect, and there is no better (or should it be worse?) scope for the feeding of personal vanity and dogmatic intolerance than the pulpit or rostrum. One is reminded of the Bishop of Redchester, in "The Pastor's Wife." "The pulpit, he knew from experience, was a calm and comfort-bringing place when he was in it; it was, indeed, his way with a pulpit that had brought the Bishop to the pinnacle of the Church on which he found himself. He was at

Top of the Sideboard below.

his best in it, knowing it for a blessed spot, free from controversy, pure from contradiction, a place where personal emotions could find no footing owing to the wise custom *that prevented congregations from answering back.*"

Thomas Sheraton appears to have migrated to London about 1790, two years after Hepplewhite's "Guide" had been first published. Sheraton's volume of designs, "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book," appeared in parts shortly after 1791, and contained 111 plates. A second edition (119 plates) is dated 1793, and a third

Mahogany Sideboard: 5 ft. 11½ in. Wide; 2 ft. ¼ in. Deep over Top; Doors 10½ in. High; 3 ft. ½ in. Total Height. Probably made by Sheraton for Adam Black, c. 1800. (Messrs. A. and C. Black.)

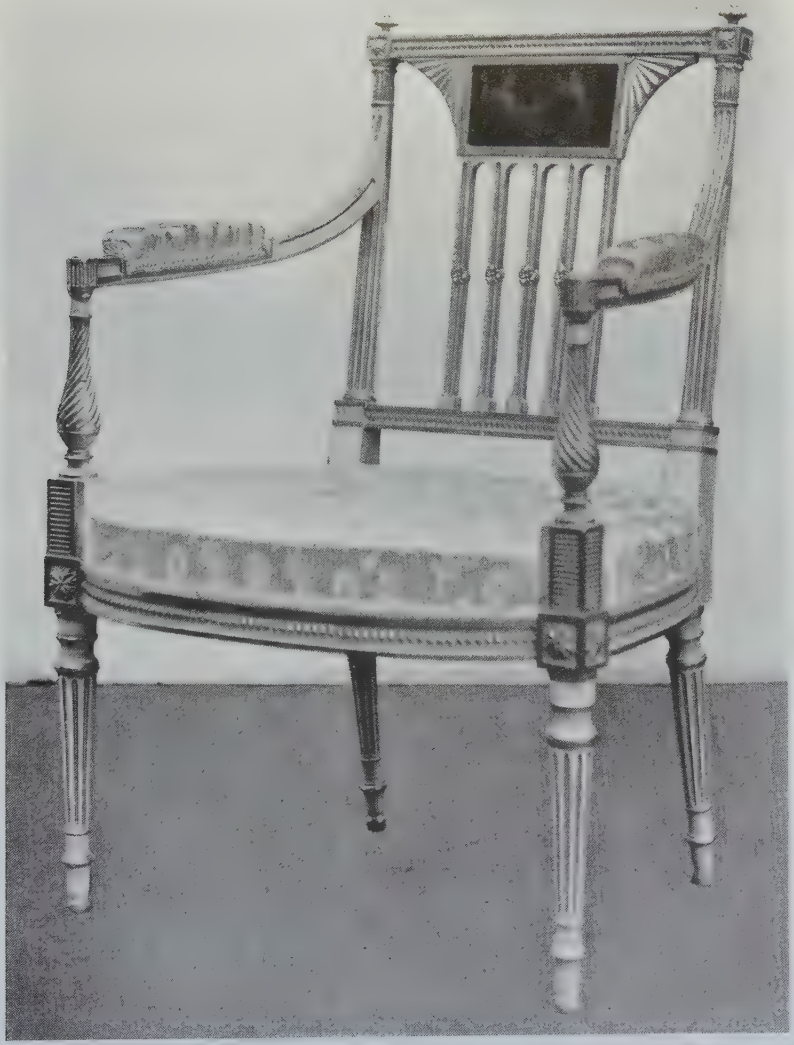
(122 plates) 1802. This book must have been projected before Sheraton left Stockton-on-Tees, if not completed in greater part,

The End View of the Sideboard on the Previous Page.

and the list of subscribers suggests that many names must have been obtained by personal canvass (probably from a prospectus only), as the greater number are adjacent to the main road which Sheraton must have travelled in his journey to London. It was the day of easy stages, by coach or on foot, with numerous stopping-places on the way. Nowadays the journey of two hundred and thirty-five miles can be accomplished in a little under six hours. More leisured travelling suited Sheraton's purpose, and even the coach may have been too rapid—and too expensive. He was always in poor circumstances, and on his subscriptions, or the promises of support, he had to depend for the necessary credit to publish a book as expensive as the one he had already projected, if not completed in sketch, detail, and text.

We are again indebted to Miss Constance Simon for information regarding Sheraton's life in London. In 1793 he lived at 41, Davies Street, Grosvenor Square; in 1795 he was at 106, Wardour Street

(that narrow thoroughfare which, less than one hundred years after, became the antique furniture market of London). In 1798 Sheraton had a shop, for the sale of his books and pamphlets, at 8, Broad Street, Golden Square.



Beech Chair, Painted and Parcel Gilt. Decorated with a Painted Panel in the Back. A Typical Sheraton "Parlour" Chair of c. 1795.

It was in this Broad Street shop that Adam Black, the founder of the firm which publishes this book (an honour of which, as the author, I am keenly sensible), found Sheraton in the latter part of 1804. Black had left Edinburgh for London, to make a fortune, if possible, to find work, as an immediate necessity, in any event. He was directed to Sheraton, who, he was told, required assistance in the preparation of "The Cabinet-Maker, Upholsterer, and General Artists' Encyclo-

Typical Chair of the Sheraton Period. Beech, Painted and Decorated; c. 1795

pædia." This work was projected in 125 parts, but only reached the letter C when Sheraton died (October 22, 1806), with 95 parts still

unborn. The future publisher of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" received half a guinea for a week's work. "Miserable as the pay was, I was half-ashamed to take it from the poor man," says Adam Black, in his "Memoirs," concluding with the following shrewd estimate of Sheraton's character: "I believe his abilities and resources are his ruin, in this respect, for by attempting to do everything, he does nothing."

It may have been that during the two years which elapsed from the time when Adam Black arrived in London, until Sheraton died, the two may have cemented the first business association with the closer ties of friendship. That Black had a high respect for Sheraton's attainments we know from his "Memoirs," and the week of work, for half a guinea, may have been supplemented by other, and

Typical Sheraton Chairs, c. 1795.

gratuitous, assistance. It is certain that Sheraton never had a workshop in London, although he may have worked, as a cabinet-maker,

for others. On pages 315 and 316 a small sideboard is illustrated, a piece which is still preserved in Messrs. Black's premises in Soho Square. It is quite simple, not of the kind which would be made in an important workshop. To me, remembering workshop days of long ago, when it was the custom in the lesser factories for men to make small pieces of furniture for their own homes, after the usual business hours were over for the day, this is just the kind of article which a workman, of limited means and restricted facilities, would make. The design of this little sideboard is much more characteristic of Sheraton than of any other eighteenth-century designer, and the workmanship is exquisite. I have no authority for its origin, but I should like to think that Sheraton, who, after the manner of many soured and misanthropic men, may have clung all the more closely to his one friend in unfriendly London, returned again to the trade of his earlier, and possibly his happier years, and made this charming little sideboard as a memento of such friendship. Probably he had only a " bench-room " in the shop of one of those makers of furniture for whom he had nothing but scorn and contempt (and to have worked in such surroundings must have been gall and wormwood to Sheraton), but his labour of love, in the cause of friendship, completed, he returned again to his pamphlets, tracts, drawing lessons (his pupils were few and far between), and his ambitious publishing ventures. But not for long. Within a few months he was to find that rest and tranquillity, that relief from the troubles of this world which had been denied to him for so long, and for which he must have yearned, when

Typical Sheraton Parlour Chair, c. 1795.

he wrote, so wistfully, "I can be well content to sit on a wooden-bottom chair myself, provided I can have common food and raiment wherewith to pass through life in peace."

Soured and disappointed, Sheraton was one who preferred to rail against a fate which condemned him to a life of obscurity and poverty, rather than to enquire into such defects of his own character as may have militated against his personal popularity and chances of success. He publishes his "Drawing Book" soon after he arrives in London, and commences, in his preface, with a scornful allusion to the "Guide" of Hepplewhite, which had appeared less than three years before. "It has already caught the decline, and perhaps, in a little time, will suddenly die in the disorder."

To state that the designs of Hepplewhite represent his own creations is wide of the truth; it is more probable that he collected the

Typical Sheraton Chairs, c. 1795.

current patterns of his time, and gave them engraved permanence, with certain modifications and improvements. No author of a book

Beech Painted Chair, c. 1795.

thing novel and artistic. The second manner is that of the "English Empire," in which Sheraton followed in the train of "Anastasius" Hope of Deepdene. The illustrations to the "Cabinet Dictionary" and the "Encyclopædia" are largely in this style. The slovenly draughtsmanship of these later plates suggest how Sheraton's artistic soul must have revolted against this manner which he was compelled to adopt, by force of circumstances.

Sheraton's chair designs are of commercial designs of furniture could well do otherwise. Sheraton himself was largely indebted to the same sources, and not a little to the "Guide" itself, and this makes his disdainful reference to Hepplewhite not only impolitic, from a newcomer, but in the worst possible taste also.

The style of Sheraton falls, naturally, into two divisions. The first is represented by the designs in the "Drawing Book," where he attempted, with considerable success, to give to the furniture trade of his time some-

Mahogany Chair, c. 1795.

Beech Painted Chair, c. 1795–1800.

among his most individual creations. It should be noted that, among the many patterns in the "Drawing Book," the shield-back is only represented once, and this is one of the weakest designs in the book. The shield-back belongs to the school of Hepplewhite, not to that of Sheraton, although many chairs of this pattern are often loosely described by the name of the latter. Sheraton owed a good deal to the models of the Louis XVI. and the Directoire, but he gave to the French designs an English character which is unmistakable, and peculiar to himself. While Sheraton was unsuccessful in London, his books must have had a large sale, although he may not have profited by the proceeds. His style undoubtedly influenced the trade of his time very powerfully. Those who are in the habit of regarding all furniture in the Chippendale style as the actual production of the St. Martin's Lane workshop (I have met with many instances of such definite attribution, on

Beech Painted Chair, c. 1795.

Mahogany Armchair, c. 1800. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

uncommon; one might almost describe them as plentiful, yet they must all have been the work of others who were influenced by the designs in the "Drawing Book."

In the designing of chair-backs Sheraton made frequent and effective use of the diamond lattice, with carved pateræ on the inter-sections, as on pages 322, 323, and 325. This detail was used either laterally, as a panel, or upright, as a central splat. A absolutely no evidence whatsoever) can have no such illusion, as far as Thomas Sheraton is concerned. He never was a master-man in London, and if he made any furniture at all, it must have been as a workman, in a shop where he would have been under a master's orders, and where he would have had little or no opportunity of making furniture after his own designs. Yet examples in the true Sheraton style are not

Beech Chair, Painted and Decorated. The "Chinese" Imitation of Bamboo, c. 1795.

very characteristic chair is the one shown on page 317, which is largely copied from French sources, yet is an English model, unmistakably.

Mahogany Armchair in Sheraton's Typical French (Louis XVI.) Manner, c. 1795.

It is, perhaps, the best testimony to Sheraton's powers, as a designer, that he could be original within such narrow limits. In the next

example, on page 318, there is little or none of this French influence. The English manner of the square-sectioned back leg is followed, a stronger method than on page 317, where the back leg matches those on the front, and is dowelled to the framing at a backward raking angle.

Sheraton's chair-backs may be resolved into four, or possibly five, distinct forms, of which all other patterns are merely variants. In this respect he differs, widely, from the school of Hepplewhite, where the basic models are much more numerous. There is the square-back formed of two lateral moulded rails, balustered with columns or shafts, as on page 325, the left-hand chair on page 321, and the pretty model on page 317. The next is where the top rail finishes into the back legs with turned spindles, as on page 318, the lower chairs on pages 322 and 323, and the long settee on this page. As a variation from this, sometimes the top rail is a solid flat band, as on the upper chair on page 322, or pierced through, as on the next page. Another pattern was the flat top rail with quadrant corners (*e.g.*, page 324) with square-sectioned balusters, or turned, as on page 320. Still

Mahogany Settee: 7 ft. 9 in. Long ; 1 ft. 11½ in. Deep Inside. Typical Sheraton Style of 1800.

another class was where the back panel was caned, as in the upper chair on page 322, or the settee on this page. A somewhat rare form,

which Sheraton describes as being in the Chinese taste, was where the jointing of bamboo was imitated, as on the lower chair on page 324. It will be found that all the Sheraton chair models conform to one or another of these patterns, often with little or no variation.

Mahogany Bergère Chair with extending Foot-rest. Known as a "Gouty Chair," c. 1800–5. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

Perhaps the most successful, certainly the most comfortable, chair of the Sheraton period is the *bergère*, similar to the one above.

The usual fashion was to cane the seat, arm-sides, and back, loose cushions or squabs being provided, with tapes at the back so that they could be tied on, the tapes being threaded through the meshes of the caning and knotted behind. The chair here has an extending foot-rest, so that it can be used for reclining as well as sitting. The usual name, for this type, in the eighteenth century, was that of a "gouty chair." In an age of hard drinking, gout must have been a prevalent complaint, and from the engravings of Hogarth and the caricatures

Satinwood Wing Wardrobe, c. 1800. (*Messrs. Gill and Reigate.*)

of Rowlandson and Gillray we can understand how general it was in the fashionable world of that day.

Sheraton's bedroom furniture is distinguished by a quiet taste and dignity. His bedposts lack the grace of Hepplewhite or Chippen-

Mahogany Wardrobe, c. 1795. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

dale, but with wardrobes and toilet tables he is more uniformly successful than either of the latter. He is more prone to the use of

lighter woods, such as satinwood or sycamore, which give a brighter character than the more sombre mahogany. The wing wardrobe on page 328 is a good example of his manner. He is, perhaps, the first

Mahogany Hanging Wardrobe Long Doors Beaded to simulate Drawers, c. 1795.
(Messrs. Gill and Reigate.)

to introduce the hanging wardrobe, as on page 330, although the former convention for the drawers below is here maintained by imitations of drawer-fronts on the doors themselves.

Furniture, especially that made for the middle-class house, was still scanty in amount, even at the close of the eighteenth century. The bedroom of this period was very sparsely furnished. A four-post bedstead, a few chairs, a small washstand of retiring habits, generally placed in a corner, and a chest of drawers, sometimes with a small separate mirror above, but often with the apparatus of the toilet

Toilet Chest of Sycamore, Closed ; c. 1795. *(C. D. Rotch, Esq.)*

concealed in the top drawer, a night commode, a wardrobe, usually small, and that was all. In the bedrooms of the larger houses the

appointments were on a more lavish scale. With rare exceptions, as at Kimbolton, the important dressing table, with jewel drawers or small cupboards, and a pivoted mirror between, was unknown until almost the end of the century, and the washstand remained an insignificant piece of furniture almost until the first years of William IV. As a compensation, it then became huge, unwieldy, and ugly. Nowhere in the house was the atrocious character of the furniture of the first half of the nineteenth century more conspicuous than in the bedroom. If the accommodation for clothes was restricted in the eighteenth century, it was hardly less so in the nineteenth, in spite of wardrobes

The Toilet Chest on the Previous Page shown with Fitted Top Drawer Open.

which were enormous, yet possessed little capacity. Sheer bulk appeared to have been the aim, and space was sacrificed to the craze.

Of the enclosed dressing tables, or chests of drawers fitted for the toilet, the one on pages 331 and 332 is a good example. Modern ideas have rejected these pieces as possessing more interest than useful purpose, and the fittings have often been sacrificed to gain the required space on the top drawer which they occupied. From their rarity, one would imagine these fitted chests to be valuable pieces, but this is an instance where rarity and value are not synonymous. An examination of one of these chests with its original fittings will disclose many fearful and wonderful implements of the toilet of the beauties of the later Georgian era. Patch boxes, tongue-scrapers, back-scratchers, and mysterious squat bottles which *may* have

Mahogany Toilet Table, c 1800. *(C. H F. Kinderman, Esq.)*

been intended for strong waters, for private or nocturnal stimulation, these will all be found in one of these old chests,

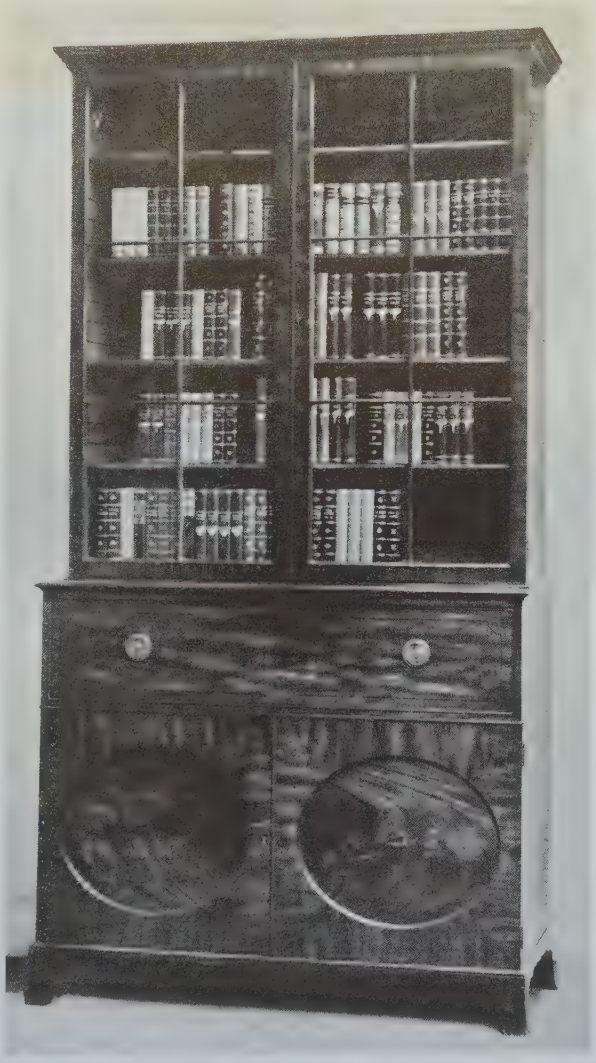
to say nothing of boxes for powders and pots for unguents and salves.

A very pretty toilet table, simple and refined, is shown on page 333. Many of these small pieces were deliberately made in two or three parts, so that they could be easily transported from place to place, if not from house to house. Thus, we find small mahogany chests, in two carcases of two drawers each, with flush brass handles at each end. These chests are often brass-bound at the corners, and may have been made for use on a ship. Some of the small dressing tables, on two pedestals, were obviously made for the bedroom, and for feminine use. The great Georgian lady was in the habit of taking her dressing table, as a part of her toilet equipage, when on a visit.

The cheval glass (or "horse-screen," as it was styled in the design books of the time) is rare before the period of Hepplewhite, and in Sheraton's hands, especially towards the end of his life, when he adopted the "English Empire" manner, while it becomes a usual piece for the bedroom, it is generally too large, coarse in detail, and of ugly proportions. The example illustrated here on this page, which is quite in the

Inlaid Cheval Glass. The Frame is Counter-weighted, and rises and falls; c. 1790–95. (*Sir Leicester Harmsworth, Bart.*)

early Sheraton manner, is well proportioned, charming in detail, especially in the engraved marqueterie in the pediment to the glass frame, and ingeniously contrived so that the frame can be raised or lowered to the desired height. The principle of the counter-weighted window-sash has been adopted. The supports are boxed, and the glass frame is hung on pivot-centres in the usual way. To these pivots are attached cords or sash-lines, which run over rollers at the top of the boxed uprights, and to the ends of these lines are attached the weights, which rise and fall inside the hollow posts. To hide the somewhat unsightly mechanism, to the square plates of the pivot-centres are attached small tongued tambour slides, which rise and fall with the sash-lines, and turn over the rollers at the top. The pinnacles, with their square bases, are movable, so that they



Satinwood Secretaire Bookcase, 1790–1800.

can be removed, and the glass frame, with its cords and weights, lifted out, when the cords can be renewed in the event of breakage or other mishap.

Furniture collecting is full of strange coincidences, as many who have made it their hobby have noticed. One of the most curious is that when a unique example is found, others of similar pattern, or device, are encountered shortly after. This is comprehensible where a novelty is illustrated in a published book, available to all, including those whose mission in life it is to supply rare pieces of "antique" furniture to order. The idea of counter-weighting a cheval-glass frame, so that it could be adjusted to any height, was a novelty to me when this photograph was taken, some three years ago. Since that time I have seen two others, identical in principle although not in design. There was no question of the genuine character of all three. The remarkable thing about these coincidences is in the short time which elapses, as a rule, between the finding of the first and others.

Satinwood Side Table Painted with Flowers, c. 1795. (*C. H. F. Kinderman, Esq.*)

There would be nothing noteworthy in such an incident if many years went by between one example and another.

The Sheraton school adopted the pull-out secretaire, with

falling hinged front supported on side quadrants, in preference to the older form of the bureau. The proportions of such pieces, as on page 335, where two doors are provided below the secretaire, are usually quite good, but where drawers take the place of the cupboard and the fall of the secretaire is beaded to simulate two drawer-fronts, the lower carcase is usually too high in appearance, when the piece is closed. As the writing-bed must be of a certain height, about 2 ft. 5 in., and of adequate depth, it is not easy to get rid of this false proportion other than by making the cabinet unduly wide. In addition, a lower cupboard with doors is more convenient than drawers, as the latter admit of no arrangement and soon become receptacles for lumber.

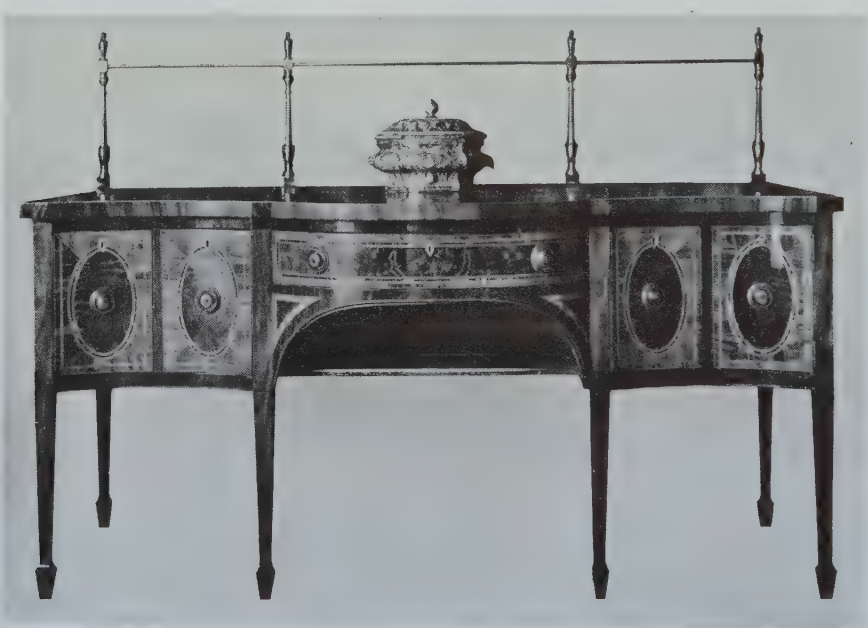
The rectangular sash-barring, as in this cabinet, although a revival from the early walnut years of the eighteenth century, is generally an indication of a late period. It was a cheaper alternative to the shaped lattice, such as on several ot the pieces which have been illustrated in the previous chapters. Although wages had somewhat

Inlaid Satinwood Semicircular Sideboard, c. 1795.

decreased in the closing years of the eighteenth century, while the cost of subsistence had increased alarmingly, thereby seriously diminish-

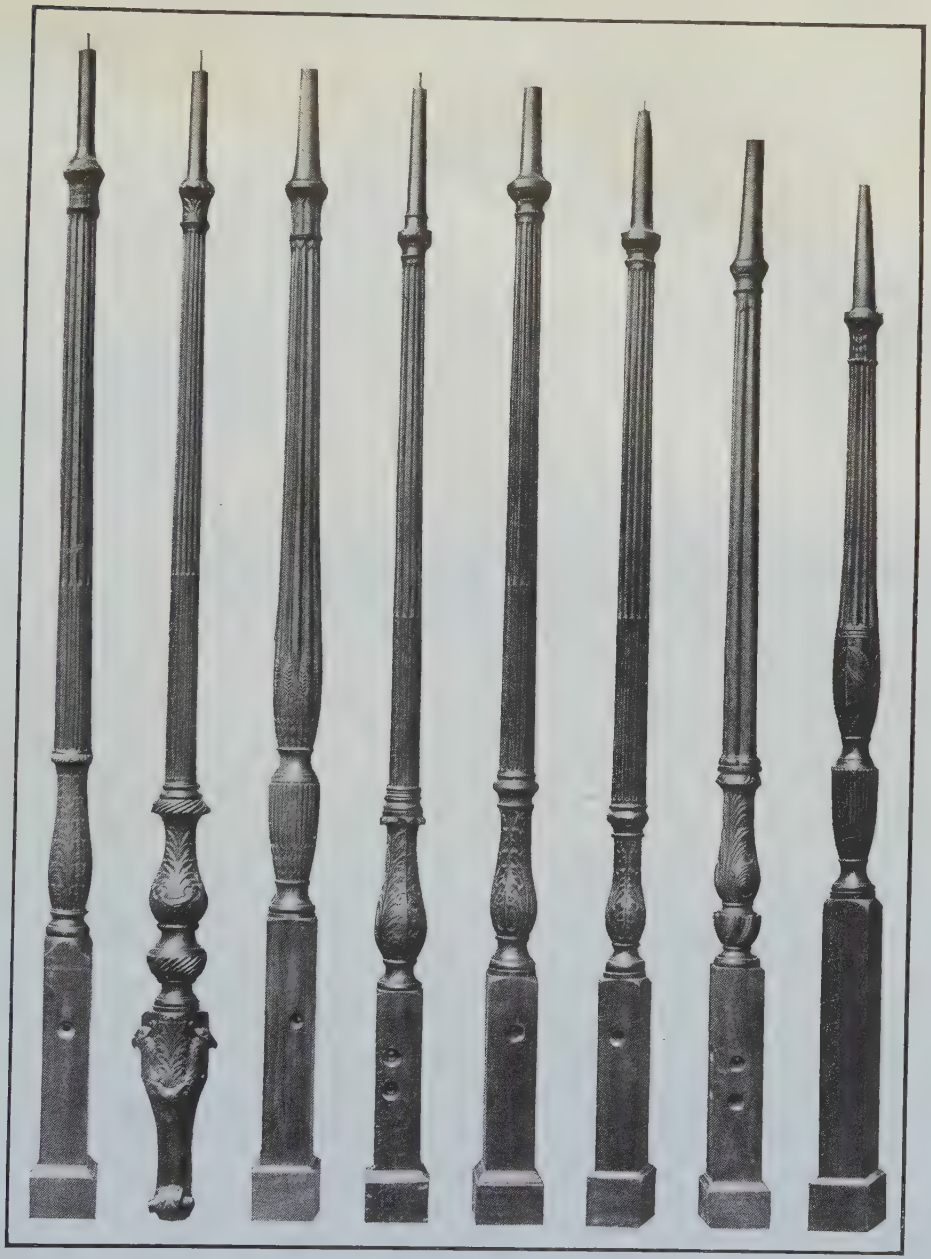
ing the purchasing power of the artisan's wages, there was a marked tendency towards cheaper production. It was not that the Napoleonic wars had impoverished the nation. The Reign of Terror in France coincided with Sheraton's first years in London, and it was not until some years later that the effects of the troubles on the other side of the Channel began to be felt here. There was the usual financial scare, of course, as nothing is more timorous, or more easily disturbed, than capital, and Sheraton must have experienced the familiar buttoning up of wealthy pockets. Actually, the real financial strain was not experienced until after 1810, and fifteen years later the conditions of the working classes became deplorable, and their degradation unique in the history of English craftsmanship.

The copious emigration from France, in 1792, brought the fear

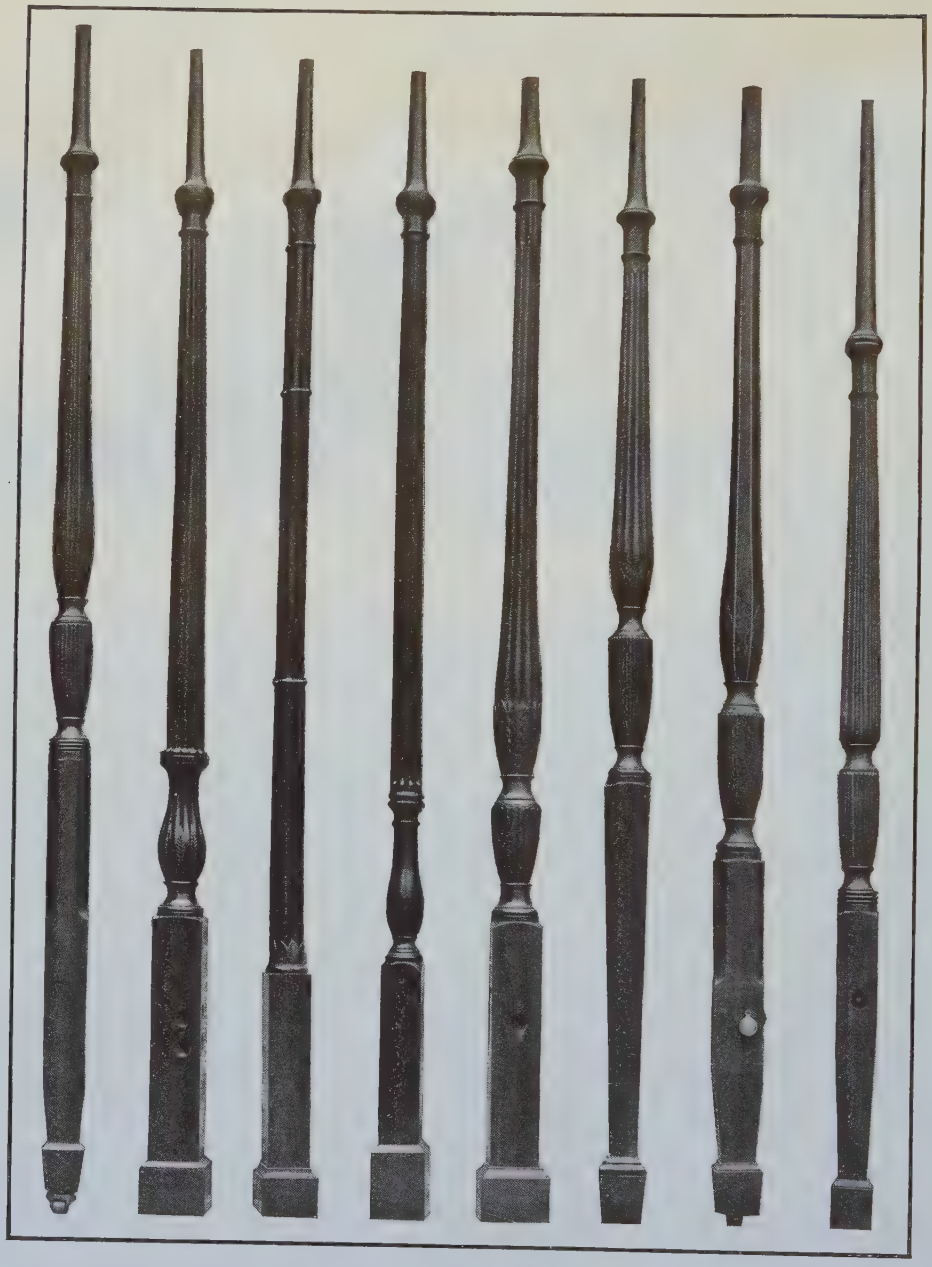


Mahogany Inlaid Sideboard with Double Cellarette Drawers: 6 ft. 5 in. Wide; 2 ft. 9 in. Extreme Depth of Top; 3 ft. ¼ in. High; Height of Brass Rail, 1 ft. 5 in.; c. 1795.

of events to come into England, to the wealthy or the aristocratic, although the working classes may have remained unaffected. With



Late Eighteenth-Century Mahogany Bedposts (*Messrs. Heal and Son.*)



Late Eighteenth-Century Mahogany Bedposts. (*Messrs. Heal and Son.*)

little to lose, only an actual and present menace could disturb their daily round of toil. There is nothing more soporific than a full day's work. Across the Channel, events were hurrying to their climax, and a French Empire was to arise, for a few years, on the ruins of sansculottism. "Your Citizen, who would be fashionable, walks abroad, with his Wife on his arm, in red wool nightcap, black shag spencer, and carmagnole complete. Aristocratism crouches low in what shelter is still left; submitting to all requisitions, vexations; too happy to escape with life. Ghastly châteaus stare on you by the wayside; disroofed, diswindowed; which the National Housebroker is peeling for the lead and ashlar. The old tenants hover disconsolate, over the Rhine with Condé; a spectacle to men. *Ci-devant* Seigneur, exquisite in palate, will become an exquisite Restaurateur Cook in Hamburg; *Ci-devant* Madame, exquisite in dress, a successful *Marchande des Modes* in London. In Newgate Street, you meet M. le Marquis, with a rough deal on his shoulder, adze and jack-plane under arm; he has taken to the joiner-trade; it being necessary to live (*faut vivre*)."

Sheraton's desire for peace, and his content with his "wood-bottomed chair," must have been seriously disturbed by the news from France. On the Monday of January 21, 1793, at ten o'clock in the morning, Louis XVI. was beheaded, the English ambassador left Paris, and war between the two countries appeared to be imminent. On the first day of the next month, France declared war against England and Holland. In the October of the same year, Marie Antoinette followed her husband to the guillotine. In November begins the Reign of Terror. At this date, Napoleon was serving as a lieutenant in the Republican artillery, Pichegru was commanding in the Netherlands, and Dugommier in Spain. In 1795 the French armies were everywhere successful, and the seeds of the later military empire were sown. The demagogues, Danton, Marat, Robespierre, and Fouquier-Tinville have all fallen, the last by the guillotine on May 8, 1795. The last insurrection, that of "13 Vendémiaire, Année 4," is suppressed by Napoleon, who is already rising to imperial heights on the ashes of the Revolution towards the close of 1795.

If Sheraton owed some of his want of success, in London, to his intolerance and lack of single purpose (the latter according to Adam Black), he was doubly unfortunate in being one short decade too late. Had he been the contemporary of Chippendale, or even of Hepplewhite, his talents might have won him renown in his lifetime, instead of the posthumous fame which posterity has accorded him. Had he devoted himself to his trade, and paid less attention to the Doctrine of Regeneration, we might have known, to-day, his capabilities as a maker, as well as a designer. Not that his style was perpetuated by others who were ill-equipped; an examination, even of the remaining pieces illustrated in this chapter, will show that the former skill had not departed from the trade of the cabinet-maker, even at the close of the eighteenth century. With Sheraton died the last, and in some respects the greatest, of the designer-craftsmen of this fine period, and while we can appreciate his merits, the many unknown makers who did so much to give his creations a permanent existence, and who carried on his traditions so ably, must not be forgotten.

CHAPTER XII

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AND MODERN POLISHES

THE term " original condition " occurs so frequently in books on the subject of English furniture that some explanation of its meaning, and a short technical description of the processes adopted in the finishing of certain woods, both in the past and at the present day, may be of service to the collector.

It must be remembered, at the outset, that " original " or " untouched condition " implies not only a surface finish in the first instance, but also upwards of two centuries or more of handling, rubbing, dusting, and general use. The result is a multitude of surface bruises, from the minute abrasion to the result of a positive mishap, a gradual wearing, or trituration by the constant removal of dust—for this, however fine, has a decided cutting action—a total filling up of the pores or grain of the wood, and a resulting polish due, either wholly or in part, to friction, or the use of wax or some form of grease. The original process, by itself, without the effect of time and continual use, does not produce this so-called " untouched condition."

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, methods of polishing varied very little in the case of oak, walnut, or mahogany. The necessity for some protection must have arisen from the discovery, in the first place, that wood left in the natural condition was liable to shrink or warp by the action of the atmosphere, and, in the second, that some description of surface polish, with its accompaniments of staining or bleaching, improved the appearance of the piece of furniture. Pieces of imported lacquer work, which, in the case of that of Oriental origin, at least, are nearly always made from soft white wood, must have suggested the preservative qualities of varnishing.

When a piece left the joiner's or chair-maker's hands, in the bare wood, "cleaned up" with the steel scraper and sand or glass paper, it was first oiled with a drying oil, such as linseed, which was either used in its natural state or coloured by the immersion of aconite or "alkanet" root in it. This oiling was repeated several times, at intervals of a day or two, and the work was then well rubbed down, and allowed to stand for at least a week. A preliminary coat of copal or some similar varnish was then given and allowed to thoroughly harden. In the case of Stuart or Tudor oak the succeeding polishing was produced by brushing or rubbing with beeswax dissolved in turpentine to the consistency of a thick paste, this waxing and rubbing being continued indefinitely, by servants, as part of the household cleaning operations. Many repetitions, at intervals long enough to allow the wax to harden by the evaporation of the turpentine, are necessary to produce a good polish on oak furniture, as if the wood be stained—as much of the early oak undoubtedly was—the stain brings up the grain of the wood and roughens the surface, and to make this smooth again, and at the same time to fill the grain without artificial adjuncts such as plaster of Paris, is a long and tedious operation.

In the case of walnut, the varnish was applied in several coats, each being carefully rubbed down with felt and Tripoli powder until a good, even, pore-filled surface was obtained. After this the piece was waxed and rubbed smooth, and left to the furbishing of domestics. Mahogany was polished in the same manner, but the oiling was more protracted, and the oil was reddened by the use of the aconite root. Thomas Sheraton, in his "Cabinet Dictionary," recommends the use of a piece of cork and finely powdered brickdust, to be used with the oil, to produce a good surface, although he says nothing about subsequent varnishing or waxing. Probably in his day a bright polish was not esteemed, especially as the fashion was for the lighter woods—satinwood, sycamore, or chestnut. Even at the present day the usual method of polishing ebony is with "rotten stone" (Tripoli) and olive oil. The general term "ebonising" implies a surface colouring with black stain and "French" or shellac polishing in the manner which will be described later.

Commercial considerations were undoubtedly responsible for the introduction of shellac or " French " polishing. The process appears to have been introduced into England during the English Empire period, about 1805–10, when the finest curl-figured mahogany was

The Top of a Mahogany Victorian Table, Veneered with Radiated Curl Veneers. Each " Leaf " is cut from the Log directly above or under the Others, to preserve the Symmetry of the Pattern. French Polishing brings out the Detail of Figure, such as this, in a Manner which Wax or Friction Polishing cannot do.

used, and a bright polish was desirable to enhance the figure and lustre of the wood. The photograph on this page shows a table-top of this

period, veneered with twelve pieces of mitred curl mahogany, each cut the one under the other, from the same log, to obtain exact symmetry. To display this figured pattern, where each pair of curls forms a perfect "feather," shellac polishing possessed a decided advantage over the earlier oiling and waxing, and the process, when carefully executed, had its recommendations, but it has, unfortunately, degenerated at the present day into mere "treacling," to use the contemptuous expression usually applied to "scamped" work.

French polishing differs very little in method in the case of different woods, excepting in the preliminary operations of staining, bleaching, or filling in the grain of the wood. Walnut is rarely stained, excepting in the event of white sapwood being used, but in good work this is cut out and rejected. It is frequently bleached with acid, "killed" afterwards with vinegar or acetic acid, when the old golden colour is desired, but this acid-bleaching is a very poor imitation of the real golden walnut. Mahogany is nearly always stained with a solution of bichromate of potash in water, when every shade of red, nearly to black, can be obtained. The process, however, is not to be recommended, as the stain impoverishes the wood, and bleaches, with the action of sunlight, to a blotchy greenish-red shade. A much better method is to burn in a vegetable brown, such as Vandyke, with strong ammonia. Satinwood is sometimes stained with coffee, but is more usually left in its natural colour. White sycamore and chestnut, when immersed in water impregnated with oxide of iron, produce the familiar "harewood" or "eyrewood" which was so generally used during the later eighteenth century. The modern silver-grey wood is also a sycamore or plane-tree with the dye forced into it by hydraulic pressure. The colour soon fades, however, and in a semi-tropical climate it will bleach to a dirty white in less than a year. Plane-tree is also stained black, right to the centre of the wood, by the same process, and is sold, under the name of black-wood, as a substitute for ebony. Ebony itself, which is only procurable in narrow widths and is usually very faulty, is rarely shellac-polished. The usual finish is a friction polish with olive oil and Tripoli powder. Coromandel ebony, the name of which indicates its origin, has rich

brown and black markings, is generally used in veneers, and is usually French polished to preserve the wood from the action of the atmosphere. Amboyna and thuja, rich brown mottled woods more often used for inlaying, are also generally shellac-polished.

To describe the process of French polishing we will take mahogany as an example, as methods are nearly the same with other woods. If polishing is to be cleanly done, the work must be polished in sections before the piece is put together. Thus a frame, especially if moulded on the inside edges of the styles and rails, cannot be polished without "dirty corners." A sunk panel is equally impossible, although the attempt is often made. The wood, "in the white," is first stained to the desired shade, and as stain causes the grain to rise, it is a good plan, before staining, to flood the surface with water and to cut the roughness down with a flat piece of soft friable pumice stone. The staining can then be done without any roughening of the surface. When the stain is dry, the next process is the filling of the grain by rubbing in plaster of Paris and water, made into a thick paste, any superfluous plaster being rubbed off before it hardens. To prevent the filled grain from showing white, a little powdered rose-pink is added. This plaster filling should be allowed to dry thoroughly, as if any moisture remain, the subsequent polishing will chill and turn to a greenish tinge. The drying should not be assisted by heat, or the panel or piece to be polished may warp or shrink. After the filling is quite dry, linseed oil should be plentifully applied with a wad of cotton-wool, and allowed to soak in for an hour, after which it should be vigorously rubbed with coarse rag to remove any superfluous oil and plaster from the surface. The actual polishing may now be commenced.

The polisher should have a corked bottle of brown shellac, or "button," polish, and another of spirit of wine, or methylated spirit, the corks of the bottles having been cut on the edges with a V-shaped incision before inserting, so that the contents can be shaken out in drops instead of being poured. A flat dish with some linseed oil, and a tin with a tight-shutting lid, to hold the "rubbers" and prevent them from becoming hard by the evaporation

of the spirit from the polish, a little finely powdered pumice powder, and some pieces of worn glasspaper, grade 0, complete the outfit. Varnishes and camel-hair brushes are adjuncts to the "treacling" before referred to, and are unnecessary for good work. If the rubber tin be empty, some "lump" white cotton-wool (not that sold by the yard in cheap drapers' shops, but by the pound) and fine calico rag (preferably old and without "dressing") must be added to the implements required.

Take enough of the cotton-wool to make a solid pad about 1½ inches in length, 1 inch each in width and thickness (even for large surfaces small rubbers are more manageable than big ones), and pour a few drops of the polish on the pad, which should be evenly covered without saturation. Wrap round this a piece of rag about 6 inches square, stretching tightly over the flat surface of the pad. To obtain this flat surface press the rubber firmly against a board; it is then ready for use. Always begin from the outer edges and work towards the centre, applying slight pressure with a circular motion. Be careful that the pressure is not heavy enough to cause the polish to exude in liquid rings, as these will remain and be difficult to remove. When the centre is reached and every part has been covered by the circular motion of the rubber, the same operation can be recommenced from the outer edges. If the piece to be polished is small in size, it should be done in conjunction with others, as the polish must not be allowed to become sticky. For the same reason the rubber must be kept continually moving. It must never be worked dry or its surface will glaze, and it will scratch the tender polish. The rag must be removed and replaced with every recharge of the rubber, and if the rag remain clean it is a sign that the work is proceeding satisfactorily. The first polishing should be continued until the whole surface is evenly covered, and no oil should be used at all. This initial process is known as "bodying in."

After the work has been allowed to stand for a day, to enable the first coat to harden and to penetrate into the wood, the second operation, known as "bodying up," may be commenced. With a rubber charged as before, used with the same circular motion, a few

drops of oil should be flicked on to the work to prevent the rubber from sticking. The oil causes the rubber to leave cloudy smears on the work, and sufficient pressure should be exerted on the rubber to keep these clouds on the surface, and to prevent the oil from amalgamating with the polish. The rubber must not be too wet, or the polish will become "rotten"; frequent and moderate recharging and firm pressure should be the rule. The second operation should be continued until a smooth even body of polish is obtained. Any irregularities or unevenness of texture at the commencement of this second process should be smoothed down with the worn glasspaper, smeared with oil, the work being carefully wiped afterwards before polishing.

The third operation is the "finishing." It is commenced, as before, with a rubber very lightly charged, and the endeavour is to polish out any smears which have "bitten" into the work. A little practice will show when the stage arrives when the oil can be removed by "spiriting off." A clean rubber, of fresh wadding, and a new piece of rag is taken, a few drops of methylated spirit shaken on to it, and spread about with the finger until it is evenly distributed. This is then passed rapidly over the work, starting from left to right, and then used with the circular motion until the oil is removed. If the spirit-rubber be too fully charged it will bite into the work; if too dry the oil will remain. It is better to undercharge the rubber, as, if this be worked dry, the oil can be removed by friction with the hand powdered with Vienna chalk. If this be not effectual, a teaspoonful of oil of vitriol in a quart of water can be used, a few drops of the mixture being rubbed over the work with a piece of cotton-wool and then finally polished with the hand and the Vienna chalk. The work should be allowed to stand a couple of hours before applying the vitriol.

The above is a description of the process of high-class polishing; the cheaper imitations do not concern us here. Shellac polishing, however perfectly done, is objectionable, as the glare of the high polish jars in a refined room, and the furniture becomes too assertive. The polish of long-continued friction is always subdued, and the furniture never looks garish. Added to this, it improves

with age and rubbing, whereas the shellac polishing scratches and marks easily, and is rarely permanent. It is exceedingly liable to "sweating," where the oil percolates through the polish, and, in combination with dust, gives the surface a disagreeable clammy appearance and a feeling of stickiness. It is better to leave the polishing in the first stage, as before described, and to proceed with beeswax and friction at intervals, trusting to time and rubbing to produce a good surface, if the work be done as a hobby and not commercially. It is the bane of modern furniture production that everything is hurried; the wood is kiln-dried in a few weeks, instead of being air-seasoned for years, veneered surfaces are "cleaned up" in a day or two, instead of being allowed to remain for several weeks, and French polishing comes to the aid of the maker who wishes to get a piece out of his workshop in the shortest space of time. Coach-body work appears to be the only trade in wood where adequate time is still taken, with the result that a coach panel will stand long after most modern furniture has been relegated to the scrapheap. We only know antique furniture to-day by what has survived, and has endured for a century or two. It has only been esteemed during comparatively recent years; before then it suffered from neglect and contempt for a hundred years or more. Even with care and attention, its survival should ensure respect for the cabinet-maker of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; with the added period when its habitat was the lumber rooms or the servants' quarters, this testimonial to honest craftsmanship becomes still more enhanced in value. When we consider also the early maker's eye for design and proportion, and the mellowing influence of time, it is little wonder that fine antique furniture realises the price it does at the present day in the leading London auction rooms.

CHAPTER XIII

WOODS USED IN ENGLISH FURNITURE

ACACIA (*Robinia pseudacacia, Linn.;* family *Leguminosæ*). A white, hard, durable wood, sometimes used for chair frames.

ACER. See MAPLE.

ACER: PSEUDO-PLATANUS. See SYCAMORE.

ALDER (*Alnus glutinosa*). An English tree which usually grows in wet and marshy soil. From its ability to resist decay and rot from the action of water it is frequently used for the piles of bridges, etc. Alder is sometimes employed for the rails of "stickback" Windsor chairs of the old-fashioned "hooped" pattern of the kind which in the later eighteenth century were usually made with elaborately carved central splats.

ALKANET (Arabic *al-kanna*, Henna). Several varieties of English plants are known by this name. The *Alkanna tinctoria* is used to stain linseed oil to a deep red; this was generally used in the eighteenth century to darken the colour of mahogany. Sheraton confuses the *Alkanna tinctoria* with the genus *Anchusa* in the article in his "Cabinet Dictionary." The usual trade term of "aconite root" is a misnomer, as alkanet has no relation to the blue monk's-hood.

AMBOYNA is the wood of *Plerospermum indicum*, one of the Byttneriads. It is a native of the West Indies. Amboyna is nearly always found, in eighteenth-century furniture, used in veneers, either for covering whole surfaces, or for inlaid panels or bandings. It has a rich yellowish-brown colour with a very close "bird's-eye" figure. Amboyna closely resembles Thuja, but the latter is somewhat darker, and the figure is not so abundant.

APPLE (*Pyrus malus, Linn.;* family *Rosaceæ*). See description of Pear, which apple-wood resembles. It is very hard and heavy. It is much used for mallet-heads and turnery.

ARBOR VITÆ. See THUJA.

ASH (*Fraxinus excelsior, Linn.;* family *Oleaceæ*). Native of Britain, Europe, America, and North Africa. Under favourable conditions reaches a height of 100 to 120 feet and diameter of 3 to 3 feet 6 inches. Wood pale yellow and liable to twist. It possesses great elasticity and tensile strength, and is used, in eighteenth-century furniture, for the backs of Windsor chairs of the hooped type. When pollarded and cut into veneers, ash is used for inlaying and veneering.

BEECH (*Fagus sylvatica, Linn.;* family *Cupuliferæ*). Large tree, common in Britain and Europe: 90 to 130 feet high, 2 to 3 feet 6 inches diameter. Wood yellowish-white with speckled grain; used for cheap chairs of the Windsor kind, and for seat-rails of chairs and rails of four-post bedsteads.

BIRCH (*Betula alba, Linn.;* family *Cupuliferæ*). Height 20 to 60 feet; diameter 9 to 18 inches. In Norway and Canada it grows to a much larger size. Wood hard, yellow, sometimes with fine figure resembling satinwood. Used for cheap, but rarely for fine furniture.

BLACK WALNUT. A name frequently applied to varieties of *Juglans nigra*. See WALNUT.

BOX (*Buxus sempervirens*, *Linn.*; family *Euphorbiaceæ*). Small tree, 15 to 30 feet high, diameter 6 to 9 inches. Wood yellow, very hard, and without figure. Used in form of lines for inlay and in solid for lathe chucks.

BROWN EBONY. See EBONY (Coromandel).

CAMPHOR WOOD (*Dryobalanops*). North Borneo. Is strongly redolent of Camphor, and was used for lining large linen chests.

CANARY WOOD, a term used in the eighteenth century for the wood of *Persea indica* or *P. canariensis* of Madeira. It is really an inferior kind of mahogany, light yellow in colour. It was extensively used for veneering and inlaying. See MAHOGANY.

CEDAR (Lebanon Cedar, *Cedrus*; one of the *Coniferæ*. Also Atlas Cedar and Deodar). Wood soft, pinkish or brown and fragrant. Very wasteful owing to amount of sapwood which has to be cut away. Generally used for sides and bottoms of drawers, and insides of cupboards. Its smell acts as a deterrent to moths and wood-beetles. Wardrobes are sometimes lined with it, on this account.

CHERRY (*Prunus avium*, *Linn.*; family *Rosaceæ*). Common to British Isles; 60 to 80 feet high, 2 to 3 feet diameter. Used for furniture panels and chairs in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Known as "fruit wood." Pale pink with yellow sap. Resembles mahogany, when old.

CHESTNUT (Horse Chestnut, *Æculus hippocastanum*, *Linn.*). A large tree, native of South-eastern Europe. Wood is white and moderately hard. Used for interiors of small drawers, and, when figured, for inlaying or surface veneering. Generally used for backs of cheap hair-brushes.

CHESTNUT (Sweet Chestnut, *Castanea sativa*, Miller; same family as Box [*q.v.*]). Large tree, often 100 feet high and 4 to 6 feet diameter. Native of Southern Europe, Asia, and North Africa. When cut radially, resembles oak, but the ray is finer. When figured, Chestnut was extensively used in the veneering of furniture, especially in the Midlands. Age turns Chestnut to a reddish-brown, and, in old furniture, it is frequently mistaken for mahogany or walnut. Many of the Restoration chairs were made from Chestnut, and pass for walnut at the present day. The difference is difficult to detect in small surfaces.

EBONY (Ceylon, *Diospyros ebenum*). The variety known as Streaked Ebony, or Coromandel, was used in furniture of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but nearly always in veneers. Many of the seventeenth-century oak cases of long-case and bracket clocks were veneered with ebony, sometimes with mouldings from the solid wood, but more often from pear-tree stained black. The wood varies from a black streaked rich brown to a dense black. *Diospyros ebenaster*, *D. melanoxylon*, *D. mabalo*, *D. tormentosa*, and *D. Roylei* are other varieties. *D. Kurzii* is a native of the Andamans.

ELM (*Ulmus campestris*, *Linn.*; family *Urticaceæ*). About 90 to 130 feet high, 10 to 15 feet in girth. A rough, strong timber, sometimes used for seats of chairs of the Windsor type. Never used otherwise for furniture. It resists decay in damp places, and is generally used for coffins. *U. major*—Dutch Elm. *U. montana*—Wych Elm, Wych Hazel.

FIR (Silver Fir, *Abies pectinata*, D.C.). An evergreen, 80 to 140 feet in height, 2 to 5 feet diameter. Native of Central and Southern Europe. Wood white, soft, and easily worked. Used for sounding-boards of pianos, etc. When forest grown, trunks are long and

straight. In open positions the trunks become short and thick with low branches.

HOLLY (*Ilex aquifolium, Linn.;* family *Aquifoliaceæ*). An evergreen, native of Britain and Europe; height 30 to 80 feet; diameter 9 to 24 inches. Wood yellow-white, hard and heavy. Generally used in furniture in form of inlaying lines.

HORNBEAM (*Carpinus betulus, Linn.;* same family as Box [*q.v.*]). 50 to 80 feet high, 18 inches to 4 feet diameter. Native of British Isles, Europe, and Western Asia. Wood heavy, hard, and white, without figure. Rarely used for furniture other than for bobbins in work-tables.

KINGWOOD is the wood of *Brya ebenus*, a native of Brazil. It is sometimes known as American Ebony, or *bois-violet*. It is somewhat lighter in colour than rosewood and more strongly marked. It is generally used in cross-cut veneers, and usually for bandings, although some rare pieces of Queen Anne cabinet work are to be found entirely veneered with this wood.

LABURNUM (*Laburnum vulgare, L. alpinum;* family *Leguminosæ*). Native of Europe. Small tree, 5 to 9 inches diameter. Heart-wood dark brown, sap yellow. Generally used in "oyster-pieces" for the veneering of late seventeenth and eighteenth century furniture.

LIGNUM VITÆ is the wood of *Guaiacum officinale*, a native of Cuba and the West Indian Islands. In colour it is a dark brown, streaked with black, and strongly marked. It is only used, in furniture, in veneer form. The wood is fairly easy to work when freshly cut, but it rapidly hardens on exposure to the atmosphere. Lignum vitæ is generally used for skittles, bowls and croquet balls. When thoroughly seasoned, it is extremely hard, but is very liable to crack and split.

LIME (*Tilia vulgaris;* family *Tiliaceæ*). A white soft wood, easy to work and with very little cross-grain. Much used during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for applied carvings of the Grinling Gibbons school.

LYSILOMA SABICU. See SABICU.

MAHOGANY. There are many varieties of this wood used at the present day, imported from America, East and West Africa, Ceylon, etc. For the purposes of this note, we are only connected with the Central American species, *Swietenia mahogani*, of the order *Meliaceæ*. The wood itself is too well known to need a description. There are many bastard varieties, but the true Mahogany, such as was so extensively used in the eighteenth century, has its habitat between lat. 10° and 23° 10′ north. Included in these parallels are Cuba, San Domingo, and Jamaica, and towards the northern-most part (17° 40′ and 23° 10′) Mexico and Honduras. The finest Mahogany, such as was used in the early eighteenth century, is the San Domingo, or Spanish, but this, in trees of any growth, is now almost extinct. It is reddish, close, very hard and heavy, and practically without figure. That from Honduras has the "plum-pudding," "ocean," or "fiddle-back" figure. The curl Mahogany is obtained from the junctions of the huge branches with the main trunk. A height of 50 feet to the first branch is not uncommon. The mahogany forest does not yield, on an average, more than two trees to the acre.

The trunk, in common with many other woods, has to be cut at a particular angle to produce figured planks. As a furniture wood it is unrivalled. No wood possesses so many desirable qualities in the one timber. The following reasons for its present high position as a furniture wood may be cited:

1. Supplies are plentiful.

2. It is not unreasonably expensive.

3. Boards are procurable in large widths with little or no sap, and the timber is comparatively free from shakes and similar imperfections.

4. It is not difficult to season, and, when properly conditioned, no furniture wood will stand better.

5. It is not difficult to work, glues well on flat or end joints, and takes a high polish.

6. The grain is close, especially in the Cuba varieties.

7. It can be procured either plain, for carcase and interior work, or magnificently figured.

8. Fine mahogany improves in colour with age.

Mahogany appears to have been first used for furniture, in England, between 1725 and 1730. It is recorded that Cortez, between 1521 and 1540, used it in the construction of his ships, and it is said (the evidence is not reliable, however) that Gillows of Lancaster imported the wood between 1640 and 1650.

The name "mahogany" is probably derived from the Aztec. It has, undoubtedly, been used, in Central America, for centuries.

MAPLE (the genus *Acer*). The Great Maple, *Acer pseudo-platanus*, is usually called the Sycamore. *A. striatum*, from North America, furnishes a white wood, much used for inlaying by marqueterie workers. The well-known "bird's-eye" Maple, which is extensively employed in panelling, especially for interior work in ships, is the wood of the North American *A. saccharinum*, or Sugar Maple.

OAK: (1) *Quercus robur*, *Linn.* (English Oak); (2) *Q. Lucombeana* (Lucombe Oak); (3) *Q. ilex* (Holm or Evergreen Oak).

(1) Divided into *Q. pedunculata* (Common Oak) and *Q. sessiliflora* (Sessile Oak). Former distinguished by stalkless leaves and long-stalked acorns. Latter has stalked leaves and stalkless acorns. Many hybrid examples are found. For commercial purposes, the timber is not separated. Common Oak often reaches 80 to 110 feet in height, and 4 to 5 feet in diameter in exposed situations. Oak can be used when the tree is about 100 to 150 years old, but it attains a great age, often over 1,000 years. The timber is too well known to need description, but the "splash-figure" only develops when the trunk is quartered (see Vol. I., Chapter II.).

(2) Is a hybrid tree first planted at Exeter about 1760.

(3) Is native of Mediterranean, but common in Southern England. Good figure when radially cut.

Brown Oak is the heart-wood of the British Oak, *Q. pedunculata*, which, owing to local conditions, assumes a rich brown colour.

Wainscot Oak is the name given to English Oak when radially cut.

Bog Oak is wood of ordinary Oak which by being buried in peat bogs turns nearly black. It is rarely sound.

Red Oak (*Q. rubra*) is the American Oak used for furniture of the commoner class.

OLIVE-WOOD is the timber of the genus *Oleaceæ*. The Common Olive, *Olea Europæa*, is a thorny shrub in its wild state, but through cultivation attains a height of 20 to 40 feet, and attains a prodigious age. Olive-wood takes a beautiful polish, with oil and continual friction. It is of a greenish-yellow, with black cloudy spots and veins. Olive-wood, especially when pollarded (*q.v.*), was frequently used for veneering the fronts of the later long-case clocks of the eighteenth century. Some specimens of this wood, when highly polished, have the appearance of greenish-yellow horn.

PADOUK, the wood of *Pterocarpus indicus*, a native of Burma. Padouk is

somewhat lighter in colour than rosewood, and more strongly tinged with red. The grain is very similar, but has a peculiar silkiness of texture. Padouk is very hard and heavy. It appears to have been first imported into England about 1730. Occasionally pieces of the early and middle Chippendale periods are found made entirely from this wood. Its toughness admits of delicate fret-cutting, impossible in mahogany.

PEAR (*Pyrus communis;* family *Rosaceæ*). Yellow to brown; hard and durable. Without figure; used for clock cases and small furniture. When stained black, and polished, it resembles ebony. Capable of being worked to very fine moulding sections. Occasionally used for applied carving, as in the "Clifford's Inn Room" at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

PINE (Scots Pine or Fir, *Pinus sylvestris, Linn.*). Native of North and Central Europe; 60 to 120 feet high; diameter 1½ to 3½ feet. Known and imported from Northern Europe under names of Red and Yellow Deal, and much used for wall-panellings in the eighteenth century. This wood must not be confused with the true Fir or Pine (see FIR). When Red Deal has been painted for many years, and the paint is removed, it shows a colour something between pear and cedar. It is distinctly an ornamental wood, whereas Pine is not. It is fairly resinous and prone to knotting, but works well. The fine Memel Red Deal is now practically unobtainable.

PITCH-PINE (*Pinus rigida*). A native of Savannah, in the Southern States of America. It is very strong and durable. The wood is yellow in colour with a light brown streaked grain. It is strongly resinous. Pitch-pine is sparingly used in eighteenth-century furniture.

PLANE (*Platanus acerifolia;* family *Platanaceæ*). A hybrid, 80 to 100 feet high, 2 to 4 feet diameter. Timber reddish or yellowish in tone, close, and fairly hard. When radially cut it shows a strong and pretty figure. It is then known as "lace-wood." Much used for veneering and inlaying during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Closely related to the Sycamore (*q.v.*).

POLLARDING is the cutting off of the whole crown of a tree, leaving it to send out new branches from the top of the stem. The new branches are never equal in magnitude to the original ones, although more numerous, and when pollarding is often repeated the trunk presents a series of amputated stumps which is very unsightly. Pollarding is usually practised in districts where fuel is scarce. The stumps often exhibit abnormalities in grain, and these portions are generally cut into veneers and pieced together by the cabinet-maker when an interesting or unusual surface appearance is desired. Pollarded woods, especially of walnut, oak, ash, elm, yew, and olive, were extensively used during the early part of the eighteenth century. The wood usually known as "pollard oak" is not a pollarded wood at all. The term is a misnomer.

PURPLE WOOD, or PURPLE HEART (*Copaifera pubiflora*). Native of British Guiana. Wood very hard and heavy, of purple tint when freshly planed, but rapidly turns brown on exposure. Trees average 120 to 150 feet, and timber squares as much as 30 inches. Formerly used by gunsmiths for ramrods, and at present day for cleaning-rods. Rarely found solid in English furniture; generally used as bandings or cock-beads on satinwood furniture.

ROSEWOOD (Ceylon, *Albizzia odoratissima;* Brazil, *Dalbergia nigra, Genuta canariensis, Convolvulus floridus, C. scoparia;* Bengal, *D. sissoo* (sissoo-wood); East Indies, *D. latifolia.*

An extended description of Rosewood is unnecessary, as it was sparingly used, even in the eighteenth century, other than in form of bandings, veneers, or inlay. It is exceedingly hard, dark reddish-brown, with dark streaks, close and even grain. It is difficult to saw, and when freshly cut has an agreeable aromatic odour.

SABICU, or SAVICU, the wood of *Lysiloma sabicu*, a genus of *Mimoseæ* akin to acacia. The wood of *Acacia formosa*, a native of Cuba, was sparingly used in the eighteenth century for furniture of the early Chippendale type. It is very hard and tough, dull red in colour, similar to plain mahogany when stained with bichromate of potash, and with a close, short grain. Sabicu was used for the stairs in the Great Exhibition of 1851, at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, before its removal to Sydenham. It is said that after six months of constant traffic, the stairs hardly exhibited any signs of wear. A set of chairs, of Sabicu, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, are to be seen in Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

SATINWOOD (Ceylon, *Chloroxylon swietenia*). Hard, yellow wood, of fine grain, lustre, and flowered figure. Obtainable in lengths up to 14 feet, and girths from 4½ to 6½ feet. (West India, *Ferolia guianensis*). The latter is similar to the former, but is usually plainer in texture, and with a peculiar yellowish-green colour. It was extensively used for furniture during the latter part of the eighteenth century, whereas the East India does not appear to be used in England before the nineteenth century. Both varieties have the same heavy timber and close texture. The shavings of the West India Satinwood give off a sweet odour when burnt.

SNAKE-WOOD is the heart of *Brosimum Aubletii*, called also *Piratinera Guianensis;* an Arctocarpad, native of Brazil. The tree often grows to a height of 70 feet. The wood is generally used in veneers, for inlaying and banding. It is of a dark yellow colour, with serrated markings of a deep brown. Snake-wood is only found in the cabinet work of the very late eighteenth century.

SYCAMORE (*Acer pseudo-platanus, Linn.*). Tree 60 to 100 feet high; trunk 2 to 4 feet diameter. Native of Europe. Wood is white or slightly yellow, often with a ripple figure. Used for backs of violins and furniture interiors. When stained to a grey colour with oxide of iron it is commonly known as "harewood" or "eyrewood."

TEAK. The name is used for two kinds of timber. One is known as Indian, the other as African Teak. The first is *Tectona grandis*, of the natural order *Verbenaceæ*. It grows in Malabar, and elsewhere in Hindustan, Ceylon, Further India, Java, etc. The second is *Oldfieldia africana*, of the natural order *Euphorbiaceæ*. The timber of both is very similar, reddish-brown in colour, strong and durable in texture, and with a greasy appearance when freshly planed. Teak is usually polished, as it has a very disagreeable odour in the natural state. When polished without staining, it is of a deep brown colour.

THUJA, or THUYA: An African tree, the *Arbor vitæ*, closely related to the *Arbor vitæ* of America, or *Thuja occidentalis*. The latter is an evergreen shrub in English gardens, although it reaches the size of a tree in tropical America. Thuja, when polished, is of a rich golden-brown colour, with a small aureole figure, centred with minute "bird's eyes." The variety used for furniture is of African growth. Thuja is nearly always used in veneers. It is frequently found in small inlaid panels in Queen Anne cabinet work.

TULIP is the wood of *Physocalymma floribunda*, the only species of the *Lager-*

stromieæ. The tree has tough oval-shaped leaves, and panicles of purple flowers very similar in appearance to the English wistaria. The wood is yellowish-brown with longitudinal striplings of a pinkish-red. It is usually cut across the width and used for cross-bandings. It is seldom employed except for inlaying or friezing. The tulip-tree is a native of Brazil.

WALNUT (*Juglans regia, Linn.*, English Walnut; *J. nigra, Linn.*, American Walnut). Former a native of mountainous regions of Caucasus and Himalayas. Introduced in England late in sixteenth century. Height 60 to 100 feet; diameter 2½ to 4 feet. Much used for chairs during the last half of the seventeenth and for furniture in the early part of the eighteenth centuries. Wood medium hardness and weight. Light brown in colour and takes a good polish. It is liable to ravages of wood-beetle. Often finely figured in burrs, when it is usually cut into veneers. Saplings are also cut across the grain and used as "oyster-pieces." Latter native of Eastern United States. Often known as Black Walnut. 80 to 100 feet high up to 3 feet diameter. Wood harder, darker, and redder than English Walnut and not so well marked. Never used in the eighteenth century or earlier. Other varieties of Walnut: French and Ancona, or Italian. Both are lighter in shade than English Walnut, and are rarely figured.

YEW (Common Yew, *Coniferæ*, *Taxus baccata*). An evergreen, 40 to 70 feet high; sometimes a shrub used in hedges, or in gardens for topiary work. Wood rich red-brown, sapwood yellow. Very hard, close, and elastic. Works with smooth surface and takes a good friction polish. Extensively used for framings and legs of Windsor chairs of the hooped-back type. Frequently pollarded in the eighteenth century and used in burr veneers. Yew was the Englishman's wood for long-bows.

ZEBRA-WOOD (*Omphalobium Lambertii*; order *Connaraceæ*). Native of Guiana. Sometimes known as pigeon-wood. Zebra-wood is usually of a tawny brown colour with vivid stripes of very dark brown. It is generally cut into veneers, for cross-bandings. Occasionally some of the smaller pieces of the later Sheraton period are veneered entirely with the wood, but the effect is generally more striking than artistic.

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